PROPHETIC ACTIVISM: EQUIPPING MENTORS TO IMPROVE STUDENT COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THROUGH SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

PROPHETIC ACTIVISM: EQUIPPING MENTORS TO IMPROVE
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SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

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The context of this project is Within My Father's House, Inc. in Lexington, Kentucky, where many Black youth fall in the juvenile justice system and filtered into the adult system. If African American male adult volunteers participate in spiritually and culturally based mentorship training program, then there will be mentors available to guide and train youth about who they are and make better cognitive decision to not enter into the justice system. The mentees attended an eight-week training session on cognitive and behavioral psychology. The methodology included questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups which proved the hypothesis of engagement with youth.

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Finally, I thank my children — Margo, Damon II, and Chloe. I thank you for being you and for loving daddy, even when it seemed as if daddy was always gone to work or school. I love you and hope you grow to be better and more determined than I am. I LOVE YOU WITH EVERY BREATH IN MY BODY.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved grandmother, Margaret Jewell Simpson Horton, who passed while I was at an intensive week in my second semester at United Theological Seminary. She was the matriarch of our family, and I sat on her lap until I was twelve years old. It was her love for the Lord and her dedication to going to church that introduced our entire family to the Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church where I was baptized at the tender age of six years old.

ABBREVIATIONS

DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DYS	Department of Youth Service
MADE	Motivated All Day Every Day
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
PATTS	Peaceful Alternatives To Tough Situations
WMFH	Within My Father's House, Inc.

The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel the warmth.

—African Proverb

INTRODUCTION

Many people say they want to work with youth; they want to go in and speak to a group; but it takes more than just going in and speaking about your life to them. It takes a commitment and a calling that most are not ready for. Yet, in their minds they are until they come face-to-face with the reality of how hard it is to deal with the youth, and not just the youth, but the parents as well. Most have never asked the question of themselves: is this what God is calling me to do? Let alone, is this the demographic of youth I am to be working with? We must see mentorship as a ministry and take it as serious as ministry.

In my spiritual journey, it was after four years of my answering the call to the ministry that I began working with youth; it took an additional two years before I recognized the demographic of youth I was actually called to work with. We are called to wait on our ministry, and in waiting make sure we sit under a pastor and get some education. I was blessed to sit under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. T. H. Peoples, Jr., senior pastor of Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church, of Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Peoples taught the sons of the church that it is not about preaching on Sundays, it is about the work of the church. Who are you touching? Who are you helping? What souls are you bringing to Christ? He would help nurture the gifts we had and would allow us to use those gifts in the direction of ministry God was calling you to. Being a troubled youth coming up and trying to find my way, I ended up with a twelve year prison sentence with two counts of trafficking in a controlled substance, along with being a gang leader.

Once I made parole and answered the call to ministry, I knew I wanted to give back and help those who were on the same track as I was to change their mindset and actions. I felt I caused enough trouble in my community. I needed to help rebuild and change outlooks on life. The solution was to help the youth, and I knew it was not going to be an easy task, and all I needed was some like-minded able-body men for the job. But little did I know the commitment it would take. I began to work with the youth at my church and worked with them for about six years. In the process, the Lord gave me a vision to establish a non-profit organization. The non-profit organization was named Within My Father's House, with a motto, "ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITHIN MY FATHER'S HOUSE." It is dedicated to spiritual and educational development. The objective is to assist the individual efforts of our participants as they realize their self-worth, determine their destiny, and embrace their spirituality. The niche for Within My Father's House was the youth, and specifically, at-risk youth. It confirmed the calling God had placed on my life to help youth and the community. I was able to establish the 859 Group, which is a group geared to youth on the verge of delinquency, gangs, and those entering into the juvenile system. I was able to take the group into the Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center in 2014 for their summer school program for five summers; and before COVID hit, I was in three Fayette County public schools with four groups. This work takes more than just myself; it takes men called to the work. It takes men who have been trained for the work. It takes men who understand who they are and whose they are. It takes men who have dealt with issues in their lives who have healed and are healing from those issues.

In chapter one, Ministry Focus, the topic of my dissertation was revealed through the synthesis of my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis papers. Part of this focus was my calling to ministry and the feelings I had behind it of where God was calling me from and then too. God called me to the ministry while in prison as I was lying in my rack. I was listening to a song by the singing duo Mary Mary, and this song was on repeat. While I was praying, I heard the lyrics of the song say that God will no put more on you than you can bear. I asked the Lord if ministry is what He was calling me to. The more I asked, the more the song kept repeating, I cried harder and harder, and I recognized the call. This was in 2005 at Marion County Adjustment Center. I made parole a year later on October 10, 2006. It still took me a year before I answered the call in front of my church because I allowed fear to grip me. I could not run any longer, and as Moses heard God's voice at the burning bush, I heard God's voice in the choir stand in church.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations, examines Exodus 3:1-15 and the story of Moses. It is Moses' identity document, telling where he comes from and showing his place in the world. This ties into the youth of today and a search for their own identity. Helping youth to understand who they are is the first key. Walking with youth through their own lens of identity and seeing where they are with the notion of God is imperative to their growth. God spoke to Moses and told Moses who He was in reference to Moses' history. God said, in Exodus 3:6, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." In essence we can introduce God through the lens of their grandparents and parents to help walk them through.

Youth tend to create identity by the social groups they hang with coming up in life. Most times – not all – the person with whom they are linked is truly not of God's calling. Prophetic activism is creating a safe place for these youth to explore their identity, explore their relationship with God, and to trust God at His word. Exodus shows us there are pitfalls in life and there are those who want you in bondage and will do everything in their power to keep you in bondage. Proverbs 22:6 reenforces what we are to do for our youth: "Train children in the right way."

This offers a narrative of oneself to empower youth in the area of identity and to whom they belong. God is calling youth from their anguish of bondage to senseless violence, from a life of not knowing one's own self, and from a life of purposelessness to a life of purpose and liberation in Him.

Chapter three, Historical Foundations, examines the life of Marcus Garvey, Pan-Africanism, the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and the African League, and the Juvenile Division. Researching history and understanding different lenses of your culture gives people an understanding of the fight that we as a people have gone through and the stride that our forefathers made. Marcus Garvey demonstrates the need of knowing one's own self and belief in God. In understanding Garvey, African American youth on the West and North Side of Lexington, Kentucky, can learn pride for themselves and their community. This will also foster a life of Black excellence as Garvey stood for himself, Black excellence in every area of their life, business, economics, politics, and community.

Garvey's life promoted Black economic uplift via self-reliance, political equality via self-determination, and liberation for Black people as a whole. Garvey laid a blueprint

for our youth to follow, a blueprint that gave a vision for a new world, a world where all people of African origin, on every continent, can be unified, self-sufficient, and proud. Garvey knew who he was at an early age. Our youth understanding of who they are and whose they are can improve their cognitive behavior and improve life for them in general.

Chapter four, Theological Foundations, looks at how this project is grounded and rooted in the liberating power of God. The exploration of Black liberation theology, Black power movement, and Pan-African ideology will help assist in the liberating power of God in the life of our youth that will propel this project to limitless possibilities for our youth, communities, and society. This theological foundation serves to advocate for social and urban understanding of who our youth are in the Black community and society.

Black liberation is God's impact on liberating Black Americans in America. It is safe to say that God's desire for Black liberation for African Americans in America is rooted in white or racial oppression. Black power equates to black freedom, black self-determination, wherein black people view themselves with pride and dignity. Pan-Africanism ideology views that all people of African descent share cultural bonds and goals for the liberation and advancement of all African people across the world.

Black liberation and Black power go hand in hand. As Black people begin to hear Jesus Christ simultaneous with their life situation and the Israelites in the Old Testament, religion then becomes a protest against the sufferings and afflictions of the Black people. With the Black youth on the West and North Side of Lexington, Kentucky, family life evokes grave concern. We must be alert to those who benefit from harming the Black

family that make sure and facilitates our youth as they are funneled through the school to prison pipeline.

Black liberation theology and Pan-Africanism ideology asserts an eschatology that confronts a world of racism with Black power. We have to see that Black power, Pan-Africanism, and religion are truly inseparable. They seemingly seek to free Black people from racism. This framework of the project is intended to make Christianity truly Christian by moving Black youth with a spirit of Black dignity and self-determination so they can become who God has intended for them to become.

Chapter five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, focuses on social behavioral and cognitive psychology. These interdisciplinary units bridge the gap between social and cognitive transformation in Lexington, Kentucky. The concept of understanding social behavior and cognitive psychology is critical in understanding our youth of today. Understanding how they think, how they view God, themselves, and others in a society that is already racially divided, and where the system is systematically stacked against them is imperative on our end. Social behavior and cognitive psychology allow us to study the human mental process and their role in thinking.

We have to change the narrative that most individuals think that our youth go off of impulse and not think about their actions. A concerted effort has to be made on our end to walk with our youth through their formidable years and not discard them to the side when they do not act a certain way or the way society deems fit. Social behavior takes into account the interaction among individuals normally within the same species.

The one axis that analyst and theology have in common and is crucial for this project is the human soul. One axis here is studying man and his motives; the other

studies God and His intentions. If the youth of the West and North side of Lexington, Kentucky, truly realize who they are spiritually, they can get a good understanding of what it means to be liberated — mentally, economically, and physically. They can learn their culture and have a sense of pride about themselves because of who they are. Then it would not only be a win for the city of Lexington but also a win for society as a whole. This project is designed to enhance the life of the Black youth by allowing them to dream big and to allow them to become who they were from birth and thus transform the community.

Chapter six, Project Analysis, gives an overview of an eight-week symposium project executed to test the hypothesis: "If African American adult volunteers in Lexington, Kentucky, participate in spiritual and culturally based mentorship training program, then there will be mentors available to guide and train youth about who they are spiritually and culturally and make better cognitive decisions to not enter into the juvenile system." This research had ten participants initially but ended with six participants who completed in the sessions and discussions. There were four data point used to test and evaluate the change in the perspectives. These were pre- and post-surveys, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and reflection journaling. Through this research project and results, I was able to see that there was a change in thought process on the men who participated, on their outlook on mentorship, how they understand themselves, and their approach to youth. There was an awareness on part of the men that they did not realize, how much of themselves they needed to deal with before working with the youth to better equipped for the work and to be successful at it. The model of training the mentor for the work is needed. There are too many individuals who want to work with

youth and at-risk youth in particular, who have not been properly trained who will do damage than good without this type of training.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

My ministry interest and skills related to the needs of the context come from wanting to see youth stop going into the juvenile system and then funneled into the adult system. As a troubled teen who felt they had no one to open up to, I understand what today's youth go through. Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church and Baptist Seminary of Kentucky helped shaped my critical thinking. Today's youth feel as if they have no one to talk with who will genuinely listen to them and not demoralize them. As a minister, I have recognized how ministers also need a counselor or pastor to open up and be vulnerable. Our youth feel as though they truly have no one, not even their family, to talk with concerning the issues they go through daily. Being a Black man, having the ability to talk with someone who looks like me and understands my struggles, has helped me and my ministry. Figuring out not just that they have someone to talk with and be vulnerable but also realizing the support team that the youth has around them to help and push them to succeed in life, makes all the difference in their lives.

Dealing with issues at an early age allows youth to grow into adults who can handle pressure differently. It gives them the knowledge or understanding of thinking critically through situations and not just reacting off impulse. They can recognize who their circle of support is and who to call for help. Life is hard, and we recognize if we do

not fully help our youth, we will eventually see them again in our adult peer counseling groups or, worse, in prison or dead.

If we can reach our youth at an early age, pre-teen to early teenage years, and allow them to share their feelings and recognize their support team, they will develop the skills to think critically through challenging situations. They will physically see that there are support systems that are not just their parents or guardians. It is through our youth program, the 859 Group, that this project will be launched to help youth develop these skills through the Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations curriculum.

> Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations is a nine-module curriculum that utilizes group instruction and role-plays to help youth learn non-violent conflict resolution skills. The youth should demonstrate more forgiveness in conflict situations and take responsibility for their choices. Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations help youth learn appropriate expressions of their emotions. Research shows that many aggressive youths are depressed and traumatized children. Aggressive children often have not had the guidance and support from their families, neighborhoods, and peers to utilize non-violent conflict skills. The 859 Group model encourages peer support and reinforcement of positive behavior and choices. The 859 Group learns from encouragement through brainstorming sessions, activities, and role-play activities.[1]

Context

As a founding member and Chief Executive Officer of the organization Within My Father's House, I provide teaching, case management, and counseling for our participants. Within My Father's House has been a partner in the work of restoring dignity, self-worth and helping our participants determine their destiny and embrace their spirituality. Our target audience is Black and brown people, but we do not discriminate

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[1] Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situation: PATTS, "The PATTS Philosophy," last modified March 2008, https://www.patts.info/.

and help anyone – Black, brown, white, yellow, male, or female – who needs our assistance. We understand the devastation of drugs and violence that plagues our communities and the lack of educational opportunities. Within My Father's House believes the time is now to rekindle our community spirit, our sense of family, and our commitment to one another. Our mission is dedicated to spiritual and educational development. Our program objective is to assist the individual efforts of our participants as they become self-sustaining members of our community through life skills and educational programs.

The primary focuses are at-risk youth dealing with trauma in the Lexington, Kentucky, area. Lexington has two youth divisions: the Department of Juvenile Justice (D.J.J.) and the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Youth Services (D.Y.S.).

> The Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice is one of five departments under the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet. While holding youth accountable for their actions, the Department of Juvenile Justice is responsible for prevention programs for at-risk youth in communities all over the Commonwealth.[2]

According to the 2018 Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center Annual Report,

> They process approximately 700 residents into and out of the program. Additionally, Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center began a new program called Alpha Ministries with staff from the Lexington-Metro Police Department. The staff began coming in weekly to do bible study with one of our groups of residence.[3]

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[2] Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, "Who We Are," last modified 2020, https://djj.ky.gov/About%20DJJ/Pages/default.aspx.

[3] Frankfort Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, "The Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice: Annual Report 2018," 23, https://djj.ky.gov/ Annual%20Reports/ Annual%20Report%202018.pdf.

I became a regular volunteer in the Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center in 2013. I taught youth in the summer school program from 2014 to 2018 a life-skilled program called "Powered for Life."

According to Stephanie Hong, Director of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Youth Services,

> The Division of Youth Services has been providing services to children and their families since 1928. The core of our services is to serve vulnerable youth and their families, assist them in navigating the Juvenile justice system, and work through meeting the developmental needs of youth by removing barriers to ensure their success into adulthood. In June of 2019 – June of 2020, the total number of clients who received intensive services was 114, with a breakdown of gender and race: Males 627 (55%), females 514 (45%); Race: Black or African American: 475 (42%), White: 433 (38%), Hispanic: 74 (7%), Bi-racial: 104 (9%) and Other: 55 (4%).[4]

While working with this youth population, I met with Mrs. Hong and the youth at the Audrey Grevious Center and shared my story with them.

We have to act now to save our youth from incarceration. Kentucky has been second only to Washington State in the number of youths detained for non-offenders. These are youth whose crimes are truancy, beyond control, or running away, often from abusive situations. Kentucky may have the distinction of leading the nation in locking up youth who have committed no crime, with the number of juveniles placed in detention centers for truancy.[5] In an Interview with Mayor Linda Gorton, She responds to a recent surge in youth gun violence in Lexington by calling on citizens to speak out.[6] As we

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[4] Stephanie Hong, "Annual Report 2020 Division of Youth Services, LFUCG," Lexington, KY: 2020, 2, 5, https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/youth-services.

[5] The Kentucky Juvenile Justice Initiative, "Our Advocacy Priorities," last modified 2017, https://www.kyjuvenilejusticeinitiative.org/advocacypriorities.

[6] *Lexington Herald Leader*, "Gun Violence Press Conference," August 27, 2020, https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/crime/article245295370.html.

observe our participants in our 859 Group, we saw the emergence of confidence in the youth. We set our goal of diverting at-risk youth ages twelve to fifteen from the juvenile system. These are youth who are on the verge of entering into the juvenile system, gang-affiliation, and have behavioral problems.

We recognize a significant weakness in our program is time. Although our youth show more confidence in themselves and do better in school, we recognize we are fighting an almost winless battle. With only twenty-four hours in a day, we struggle with enough time with our youth in the program. We meet with our group twice a week for approximately forty-five minutes a session. That leaves five hours of school; then many of them go home into their environment that causes their issues in the first place for the rest of the day and evening. We have recognized that youth need more time with alternative activities outside of school and home to keep them focused and away from harmful distractions and hobbies. Conversations with youth show they want better and can do better, but life is demanding without those opportunities or other people pouring into them.

The program's strengths come from our youth's understanding that other adults are willing to help them succeed in life. We can track their behavior, attendance, and grades while they are in our program. Youth can figure out who they can call on in times of crisis and uncertainty with issues they face. Youth recognize their teachers will help them succeed and give them extra help if needed and are willing to stay after school to get them caught up on assignments. Students learn to reprogram their brains through our role-playing of situations. Youth recognize it is okay to walk away from a fight and that they are not a punk but a person taking their life seriously. When asked the question, "Do

you think about what you are doing" or "Do you just react to the situation," most youth answer, "They just react." Our youth act impulsively because their brains have to work hard to reign in their behavior. The youth could care less about the consequences. They learn how to think through challenging situations and not react to get into trouble.

This change in thinking does not happen overnight for the youth but over time while working through those challenging issues. We can track them through school; once they enter our program, they sign paperwork that permits us to follow them through graduation. We just do not let them go after their ninth-grade year. We continue to monitor them and even bring them back as peer support for our incoming freshmen. They help new students deal with similar issues they have faced in life. The peer support can share their story and how the program has helped them overcome barriers they have faced. If the youth want to continue to be in the group, they can continue to participate.

Ministry Journey

I bring several skills and interests to ministry: a fearless spirit and a keen ear to hear along with listening well. I can relate to and empathize with our youth and possess resilience. My emphasis at Baptist Seminary of Kentucky was pastoral care and counseling (e.g., Pastoral Care with Children, Adolescents and Families, Pastoral Care and Counseling with Addicted Persons and their Families, and Clinical Pastor Education). Learning to listen well for what is said and not said from youth takes a keen ear to hear. Youth will not open up to you right off. Most often, it will take them time to trust and accept you before they do. Often, people listen to answer when someone is speaking. Realizing I had to listen critically to what a person is saying and even take

notes to process what is stated helps in understanding the process. Reading the body language and facial expressions of a person when they are talking is a part of that process. Writing verbatims learned from contextual pastoral education allowed me to work through a conversation to make a good assessment of a situation. First, I would get permission before a counseling session from the participant to let them know I would be writing down word for word what was said to share with my pastoral counseling supervisor.

In this ministry, I am relatable and able to empathize with our youth. Sitting under Reverend Doctor T. H. Peoples, Jr. at the Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church taught me how to share myself authentically and not be ashamed. I am a minister who comes from similar backgrounds and situations of our youth, which helps them see and realize I am no different than them. Youth can talk with me and express themselves without thinking they are being judged for their actions. In the same instance, the youth realize they can change their lives and not continue on the same path. Our youth want to change. They have to realize it is okay to change and strive for excellence and push their friends to change. The youth also need to be taught how to form new habits. Change and new habits do not come easy. The youth have to be taught how to be deliberate in their change. We, as adults, have a hard time changing, and it is twice as hard for our youth to change.

This ministry is not for the faint of heart. There are more heartaches than accolades. We realize that all youth who come into our program will not be saved, and you have to be okay with that. You will lose youth because some of our youth will not hear you or even care what you have to say. You will lose youth to gun violence, gangs,

street life, and prison so there has to be resilience in you. There is no giving up because it is hard or they will not listen. You have to develop a tough skin to push through. These youth know to push your buttons to see if you will give up and leave just like everybody else. I have even had people ask me, "How do you do it?" I recognize that life is full of challenges, and as a youth, I had plenty of obstacles I faced, but these youth today have those obstacles and more. Today's youth face obstacles that we as youth never had to such as cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a form of harassment used through electronics and is very common amongst teenagers.

We have to stop looking at the ministry as being a softhearted, mild-manner vocation. Ministry can be challenging, cold, or even ugly at the time. When dealing with at-risk youth, sometimes you have to be hardcore for them to understand. Sometimes you have to become a dog to catch a dog. You have to be willing to ride around the city where these youth live and find them in their neighborhood. You have to talk with them to figure out what is going on with them and get them out of that environment. You have to tell them the harsh realities of their lives and the places it will take them if they continue on the same path. In a life where you follow the Epicurean way of living, there are only two places it will take you: to the grave or prison. Epicurean philosophy means taking joy in life: "eat, sleep and be merry, for tomorrow we die."[7] Some of our youth live this way, and they have no fear or shame about what they do.

In ministry, I had to develop that light that sparks interest for our youth to listen. I had to show that you can call me and I would answer the phone and help you in your time

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[7] This is a capsulated definition of the teachings of the Greek Philosopher Epicurus. This involves its basic meaning of a lifestyle.

of need, no matter the time. The youth have to believe in me no matter the situation unless it is about harming themselves or others.

Develop the Synergy

I am a minister who experienced gangs, drugs, guns, and a twelve-year prison sentence. I was fortunate to make it through. We are losing our youth at an alarming rate to gangs, drugs, guns, and the prison system. "Lexington's chief of police, officers on the streets, and the county's top prosecutor all agree that more teenagers in Lexington are using guns, and often in public places, where shots can hit innocent bystanders."[8] Gangs are not new to Lexington, Kentucky. By the age of eight or nine, I started experimenting with alcohol; and by the age of thirteen, I started smoking marijuana. In 1989-1990, I joined a gang called the D-Lords (Death Lords) at fifteen or sixteen and started hanging out and carrying guns. I joined the D-Lords because I felt I was not getting the love I needed from home. They accepted me for me and showed me the love I was longing for, or at least what I was looking for at the time. Plus, it was exciting to me to be in a gang. For once in my life, no one told me that I was on the fast track to prison.

Most adolescents and youth turn to the streets and join gangs because they feel no love at home. Most youth I have spoken with feel there is no support at home and do not want to be home. They turn to the streets and those in the streets to find everything they are looking for, love, acceptance, and family. If you talk to any gang member, they will

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[8] Sam Dick, "WKYT Investigates: Gangs in Lexington," WKYT STANDS FOR KENTUCKY, August 24, 2017, https://www.wkyt.com/content/news/WKYT-Investigates-Gangs-in-Lexington-441658723.html.

tell you that those in the gang are their brothers, family and will do anything to protect their family.

Our youth need life spoken into them, and true love showed them. While working with youth and their families in Lexington, I hear parents, guardians, and grandparents say, “They are tired.” They want to give up on their youth and allow the system to raise them. Fayette County public school system funnels at-risk youth through two alternative schools: Martin Luther King, Jr. Academy for Excellence (referred to as MLK Academy) and Audrey Grevious Center. MLK Academy uses a particular philosophy,

> A unique feature of the academy is an intervention model that uses Case Management and Multidisciplinary Teams of social workers, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and community professional who combine their efforts to work more holistically with students.”[9]

The Audrey Grevious Center too has a distinct approach to education.

> [It] is a treatment center and non-traditional school all in one. Students, ages twelve to seventeen, learn the behavior, academic and social skills needed to transfer back to their home schools to graduate.[10]

We realize the school-to-prison pipeline is actual.

> The school-to-prison pipeline is a process through which students are pushed out of schools and into prisons. In other words, it is a process of criminalizing youth that is carried out by disciplinary policies within schools that put students into contact with law enforcement. Once they are put into contact with law enforcement for disciplinary reasons, many are then pushed out of the educational environment and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.[11]

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[9] MLK Jr. Academy for Excellence, “Intelligence Plus Character: That is the Goal of True Education,” https://www.fcps.net/domain/6629.

[10] Lexington.gov, Audrey Grevious Center, last modified 2021, https://www.lexingtonky.gov/lexington-day-treatment-center.

[11] Nicki Lisa Cole, “Understanding the School-to-Prison Pipeline,” October 20, 2020, https://www.thoughtco.com/school-to-prison-pipeline-4136170.

I am proposing a Delinquency Prevention Empowerment Youth Program called the 859 Group to divert at-risk youth ages twelve to seventeen from the juvenile system. Youth on the verge or at-risk of entering into the juvenile system, who may be gang-affiliated and who have behavioral problems, will be specifically targeted and selected for the program. Groups of up to ten students will be served at a time and followed through school. The youth, along with his or her parent or guardian, will complete an intake packet before entering the program. The intake packet gives us a view of the youth and who is in the family. It lets us know of the youths' educational history as well as medical history. We go through strength-based planning and interest and find community supports, to name a few things in the packet.

The program's core will be the evidence-based group intervention, Peaceful Alternatives to Tough Situations curriculum, and wraparound services. Group services are a way to empower students, deter negative behavior, and reinforce positive behavior. We want our youth to think before they act or react. We want them to think about all the possible consequences that could happen to them. Thinking about those consequences will not be easy, but it can be done, especially with wraparound services.

> Wraparound differs from many delivery strategies in that it provides a comprehensive, holistic, youth and family-driven way of responding when children or youth experience serious mental health or behavioral challenges. Wraparound puts the child or youth and family at the center. With support from a team of professionals and natural supports, the family's ideas and perspectives about what they need and what will be helpful drive all of the work in Wraparound.[12]

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[12] National Wraparound Initiative, "Wraparound Basics or What is Wraparound: An Introduction," last modified 2021, https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/.

Young people need in-school and after-school activities supervised that support their educational needs and provide them with skills and training.

When dealing with youth, it is always good to find a connection in their lives. I possess unique ministry skills and have walked in similar shoes as they have and are presently doing. In listening to the youth as we talk, I find the connection, be it gang life, the drug game, or locked up in the system. I use it to gain their acceptance. If the youth do not accept you, they will not listen to you. From gaining their acceptance, you build the relationship. Youth are not dumb and they know when you are not authentic, so being transparent and consistent with them builds their trust in you. Being transparent about who you once were, allows the youth to see a "real adult." A "real adult" is someone who has made mistakes in their lives and is not afraid to share those mistakes with others. Most adults will not share themselves in light of bad decision-making and mistakes from their past.

My openness and willingness to share me with the youth take me into places that most will never be able to go. The ability to connect, gain trust to where a youth asks to speak with you about a vulnerable situation, does not happen to anyone. My pastor, Reverend Doctor T. H. Peoples, Jr., spoke to our church family and said about me a few years ago, "Horton goes to places you won't go and deals with people you won't deal with."[13] In dealing with our youth, you cannot be scared to engage them. Having a fearless spirit is critical to my ministry skills. When dealing with youth, sometimes bigger and taller than you, you have to show dominance as the alpha male or female. You

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[13] This is a comment made in a church service by Reverend Doctor T. H. Peoples, Jr., pastor of the Historic Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky.

cannot show any fear. Fearlessness comes from knowing my calling to youth and specifically at-risk youth. You have to love speaking life into youth and watching them grow.

I want to see the youth succeed in life and not be a statistic on another R.I.P. t-shirt. The youth need to know it is okay to dream, dream big, and follow those dreams through. We are in a time and age where if it does not happen right away for youth, they just quit whatever they are trying to obtain. My intent is for the youth to realize we live a life like running a marathon and not a sprint. It takes time and effort for your dreams to manifest and come to fruition. You have to put in the work for it to happen, and that you may even have to go back and rewrite it again and rework it again. Since 2021 has started, we have five teenagers killed in Lexington, Kentucky. That is five too many for me. Most youth cannot see past the age of eighteen because they have had so many of their friends killed. We have to change that narrative. We have to make preparing for their future a norm again. Seeing themselves go to college has to be a goal again for our youth.

The general nature and content of the proposed project are conflict resolution and wraparound services. The youth will learn and understand their anger cues and triggers, focus on positive communication skills, accepting responsibility for their actions, and self-control strategies. Anger cues are the warning signs telling a person they are becoming angry, and anger triggers are anything that initiates anger or angry emotion in a person. Youth will understand that anger is not destructive. It is what you do while angry that is the problem. Anger is a natural emotion that everybody has. There is nothing wrong with getting angry. Anger allows the youth or person to know something is wrong,

or they do not like something. Recognizing those anger cues and triggers and exactly where they lie in the subconscious of the youth is critical to developing self-control strategies.

Learning to listen to one another is one of the most important aspects of positive communication. Youth need to be able to listen well and comprehend what is being said to them. Youth will learn to say what they mean clearly and directly to their peers, parents, and teachers. Participants will work on speaking in a friendly tone and through non-verbal communication with facial expressions and body language. Participants will learn the importance of maintaining good eye contact and hand gestures while speaking to others. Through positive communication skills, youth can break down barriers with their peers, family, teachers, and others about the differences they experience with one another. Positive communication skills also create strong relationships for all involved.

When the youth learn to accept their responsibilities, they learn to accept their actions and the consequences of those actions. The acceptance of responsibility breeds forgiveness. Participants will learn that when a person wrongs another, the trust between them is compromised. The process of accepting responsibility is not easy. When we are wronged, we feel we have a right to retaliate and make the person hurt the way they hurt us. Taking responsibility and positive communication skills allow all parties to see from each other's point of view.

Self-control strategies are developed strategies the youth will learn to use to prevent the escalation of anger before they lose control. Developing these strategies equips the mind of the youth to see the possible experience and consequences that may happen. These strategies could be taking a walk, counting from 100, or even breathing

deeply. The best strategy result is when the youth has changed their impulsive thinking or beliefs. For example, a youth may get angry and want to fight when other youth steps on their shoe, but instead of arguing with the other youth, they go and cleans their shoe and walk away. The youth could perceive that it is just crowded and need to leave the area and go where it is less crowded. This type of thinking is a new habit that needs to be developed in the mind of the youth and will take some time. We develop this type of self-control through goal setting. There has to be a plan set and in motion to help the youth.

A vital component of this program is our wraparound services. We must be able to incorporate the youth support team into the program. We identify those individuals who are willing to help the youth succeed in life. The support team can be other family members, teachers, coaches, counselors, etc. Once the support team is recognized, we set a support team meeting. In this meeting, a facilitator oversees the meeting and does not allow any negative comments about the youth. We allow every person on the team to say one positive thing about the youth. Sometimes, this may be the first positive accolade the youth hear about themselves. The positive accolades can take a toll on the youth, and it can be emotional to hear what good the team has to say about the youth.

The goal of the support team meeting is to allow the youth and team to come up collectively with goals set for the youth. All members of the team have to buy into the plan for it to work. The support team is a collective team effort and will only work with everyone working together holding the youth accountable and themselves accountable to what they say they will do. As the youth go along, we show the youth what to do, we help them along, and then we cheer them on as they go forward in their plan for success.

What do I seek to learn from this Doctor of Ministry project? Based upon my ministry settings and skills, I am led by the spirit to implement a project using these tools in a real-life environment. I have yet to implement this particular program in a real-life setting and have worked mainly inside the Fayette Regional Juvenile Detention Center to teach a life skills program called Powered for Life. I was able to see the transformation from that standpoint in the facility, but it was a captivated audience. They had to be there. With this program, it would be suggested to the youth and family that it would be a good program for them to participate. The driving impetus of this project is to understand the circumstances of troubled youth by forming a bond to help them.

What adjustments need to be made? I plan to adjust the project so that the program is applicable to middle school-aged youth. This will expand the program even more to be able to reach more youth in the future. While working with different demographic ethnic groups, there is a cultural understanding that needs to happen. I will be looking to see if there are language barriers with Spanish-speaking youth and zero tolerance for racial slurs. I want to learn how different ethnicities interact in a vulnerable environment or if the youth can be vulnerable in a program like this.

Conclusion

The general nature and content of the project are evidence-based group intervention, conflict resolution, and wraparound services for at-risk youth in Lexington, Kentucky. If we address at-risk youth who are on the verge of truancy and entering into the juvenile facility in a group setting with this program, it will positively affect them and

their thinking. The youth will be able to identify their support team and have the tools to succeed in life.

If at-risk youth are not engaged positively and given the tools to help with trauma and conflict to help change their impulsive thinking, they are destined for the juvenile center, or worse, adult jail or death. Today's youth are very impulsive in their actions, with little thought at all in what they do. I have heard first-hand they do not think. They react. We have to combat that attitude of not thinking to an attitude of thought. We have to be there for our youth and help them understand the benefits of thinking through a situation or conflict. We are losing too many of our youth to the streets, gun violence, and juvenile detention centers.

With the implementation of this project, I am pushing for a seventy-five percent success rate. I look for the youth to do better in school, less behavioral issues with less truancy, and less involvement with the juvenile system. Their grades should start to come up, and they will receive the support from their team they desire. There will be some pushback from youth, but when they realize we are here to help them succeed in school and life, we hope they will buy into the program and see the program's benefits.

First, we will identify what youth should be in the program from one of the high schools in Lexington, Kentucky, possibly Bryan Station Sr. High School. After the youth are identified and the principal speaks with them, I will come in and share what the program is all about and give them their youth pre-surveys. The youth pre-survey gives us a look at the mindset and how important schoolwork is to the youth. The survey also asks questions about alcohol and marijuana usage. The principal and guidance counselor

will have already spoken to the parents or guardians of the youth, and they will come in, and we will go over our intake packet together.

The intake packet consists of a parent/guardian agreement for the youth to participate in the program. It has the authorization to release the confidentiality information sheet, a claim wavier, and general release of name to use name, image, and background for all purposes, including our website. The last sheet is a transportation release form for scheduled field trips, if any, or if a youth needs to be picked up from school or taken to school. The dates and times of our scheduled meetings are then set.

Last, we come in for our meetings and give a brief introduction of who we are and what we hope to gain from the program. Then we start the program and build from there, set individual times for a support team meeting within the first week, and set goals to be accomplished. In the program, we start with anger cues and triggers and build into role-playing. From this point on, we build relationships, trust, and confidence from everyone in the group and the support team for the youth.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

In her article "What is an Identity Crisis," Kendra Cherry writes,

> An identity crisis is a developmental event that involves a person questioning their sense of self or place in the world. The concept originates in the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, who believed that the formation of identity was one of the most important conflicts that people face. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself.[1]

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "identity" as "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual, the relation established by psychological identification, the condition of being the same with something described or asserted."[2]

Many youth gain their identity from collective identity. "Collective identity refers to all the cognitive and affective aspects deriving from belonging to certain groups with which adolescents identify themselves and which place them within certain social categories such as ethnicity, nationality, or gender."[3] When dealing with an identity crisis, it is essential to note that it is not a medical diagnosis or a condition, so there are no symptoms; instead, it is psychological. Psychological meaning arises in a person's

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[1] Kendra Cherry, "What Is an Identity Crisis?" Theories Personality Psychology, November 10, 2022, https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-an-identity-crisis-2795984.

[2] *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s. v. "identity," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.

[3] David A. Snow and Catherine Corrigall-Brown, "Collective Identity," https://www.science direct.com/topics/social-sciences/collective-identity.

mind, relating to a person's mental and emotional state. People going through identity crises usually find themselves reflecting and asking specific questions such as: Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What are my spiritual values? This type of questioning is very typical since we change throughout our lives.

I am speaking from personal experience here; Black youth tend to identify with their surroundings, whether gangbanging, selling drugs, music, or sports. Black youth tend to, but not all, grow up in environments where they see those images in their everyday life and tend to gravitate towards them and become what they see and hear. Most of the time, it is not until later on in life that they realize that the person I have been portraying is not really who I am and then have no clue who they indeed are. Understanding who they are, as related to God, and whose they are, changes their perspective on life. They will no longer have to answer to a name that was given to them by other people. They no longer have to live a destructive life for themselves and their families and others.

African American youth from Lexington, Kentucky, demonstrate these same types of behaviors. There are at least thirteen churches along the Georgetown Street corridor and six on the Northside of Lexington, Kentucky, along Russell Cave Road and surrounding neighborhoods. Our Black youth still demonstrate deviant behavior from not knowing who they are. So, saying there is a disconnect between the church and reaching our youth in the communities they serve is an understatement.

My present context is as Chief Executive Officer of Within My Father's House, Inc., a nonprofit organization that was established in 2012. We received our 501c3 status in April 2014. Within My Father's House, Inc. is dedicated to helping youth obtain

educational and spiritual development. Within My Father's House understands the plight of Black communities. Within My Father's House understand the devastation of drugs and violence that has plagued Black communities and the lack of educational opportunities therein. Within My Father's House recognizes a few people who have the heart to serve Black communities through spiritual and educational programs. I am led to develop a ministry program that attempts to bridge the church and youth gap. The program will help Black youth at Bryan Station Senior High School on the Northside of Lexington and the Success Academy on the Westside of Lexington — both are within the 40511-zip code area and understand who they are and whose they are from a biblical standpoint. This project will explore the work of prophetic activism advocating through behavioral and cognitive psychology with the assertion: if you know better, then you will do better.

Foundational to the doctoral thesis is Exodus 3:1-15. Exodus, (in the Greek, Latin, and English versions), means "as going out," referring to the seminal event of the liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage through the wondrous acts and power of God.[4] The Book of Exodus shines a light on behavioral and cognitive psychology. The importance of Black youth understanding who they are and whose they are in reference to God is of importance to growth and maturity.

This paper will reflect on the Book of Exodus of God's revelation to Moses, the rebel courtier whom he has picked to be the Israelite leader, that he is YHWH, the God of their fathers, an abiding presence that will rescue them from their misery and bring them

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[4] Britannica, "Exodus, Definition, Summary & Facts," https://www.britannica.com/event/Exodus-Old-Testament.

into Canaan, the land of promise.[5] This reflection can also transform the lives of Black youth in Lexington, Kentucky. Lexington's Black youth can have the same revelational discovery illustrated in Exodus 3:1-15. Exodus chapter 3:1-15 will lay a biblical foundation for this project that will help set the tone to develop youth into responsible, conscious citizens who understand who they are in their family and communities.

Exodus: Literary Analysis and Outline

Literary Analysis

In order to understand the book properly, we must recognize that Exodus is primarily narrative. The book contains poetry and lengthy legal passages, but both the poetry and the laws are set in a narrative framework.[6] The Book of Exodus is an unusually complex literary work, even by the standards of the Bible. Not only does it comprise a remarkable variety of literary genres – prose, poetry, ritual, law, architectural blueprint, and genealogy – but, as we will see, reflects a range of individual preliterary traditions and multiple literary hands.[7]

> There are two major categories of data to explore: material artifacts and textual records. Within the first, we might well expect to find some material remains either from Israel's four hundred years in Egypt or from their forty years in the wilderness. These were, after all, humans, living human lives: building dwellings, consuming food, discarding waste, participating in communal celebrations, dying,

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[5] Britannica, "Exodus, Definition, Summary, & Facts," https://www.britannica.com/event/Exodus-Old-Testament.

[6] Coy D. Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary, An Exegesis & Application of the Holy Scriptures, Exodus*, ed. Eddie Closer, David Stewart, Timothy Paul Westbrook, Don Shackelford, and Duane Warden (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2008), 7.

[7] Joel S. Baben, *The Book of Exodus: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 1, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvc773s1.5.

> and being buried. We need think only of the various discoveries of Paleolithic remains in Africa, or Neanderthals in Europe, to recognize that even much smaller groups of people cannot avoid leaving some trace of themselves behind, be it only a single cave painting, a solitary jawbone, or a stray flint.[8]

Exodus is the second book of the Hebrew Bible, but it may rank first in lasting cultural importance. It is here that the classic biblical themes of oppression and redemption, of human enslavement and divine salvation, are most dramatically expressed.[9] Exodus marks the full-grown antagonism between the chosen nation and the heathen world, records the violent separation between the two, and then confines itself mainly to the history of the party that remained in communion with God.[10]

Outline of Exodus

Exodus is to the Old Testament as the Gospels are to the New Testament.[11] Both proclaim the redemptive activity of God conceived in his compassion for the plight of man-in-bondage.[12] Each anchors the revelation of God firmly to history, and each focuses in the activity of a covenant mediator who fulfils his calling by the selfless giving of his own person: Moses in Exodus, Jesus in the Gospels.[13] Both portray the sealing of a

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[8] Baben, *The Book of Exodus,* 3-4.

[9] Baben, *The Book of Exodus,* 1.

[10] James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Exodus* (Eugene, OR: Wipe and Stock Publisher, 1998), 14.

[11] Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr., *Exodus*, vol. 1, The Broadman Bible Commentary, ed. Clifton J. Allen, John I. Durham, Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr., John William MacGorman, Frank Stagg, William J. Fallis, Joseph F. Green, and Howard P. Colson (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1969), 305.

[12] Honeycutt, Jr., *Exodus*, 305.

[13] Honeycutt, Jr., *Exodus*, 305.

covenant with those who have chosen to follow the redeemer God, and in both there is the revelation of the divine will for inward character and outward conduct among those who have been chosen to follow the Lord of the covenant.[14]

Exodus means "departure" or "outgoing," and was selected as an appropriate name for a work which treats mainly of the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.[15] The name comes ultimately from the Greek and means "the way out."[16] The ancient Jews used the first significant word of the Hebrew text, *she moth* ("names") to designate this book.[17] The traditional Jewish view is that Exodus, like the other four books of the Pentateuch, was written by Moses.[18] This, however, is not so much a statement of authorship as a religious affirmation that the book derives its authorship from the work of Moses.[19]

> While the departure of the Israelite out of Egypt, and the mode in which it was brought about, constitute the main subject of the book, and occupy its middle portion (chs. ii.-xviii.), two other subjects are also treated of, which form the prologue and the epilogue of the principle drama. The former of these – the subject matter of ch. i. – is the increase and growth of the Israelites — their development from a tribe into a nation. The latter, which in spiritual grandeur and importance holds a pre-eminent rank, is the adoption of Israel as God's peculiar people by the Law given and the Covenant entered into at Mount Sinai (chs. xix.--xl). The contents are thus in part historical, in part legislative.[20]

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[14] Honeycutt, Jr., *Exodus*, 305.

[15] George Rawlinson, *The Book of Exodus,* vol. 1, Genesis – Exodus, The Pulpit Commentary, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1980), i.

[16] James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1993), 233.

[17] Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 233.

[18] Ronald E. Clements, *Exodus*, in The Cambridge Bible Commentary, ed. P. R. Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leaney, and J. W. Packer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 2.

[19] Clements, *Exodus*, 2.

[20] Rawlinson, *The Book Of Exodus,* i.

The following outline shows the shape of the Book of Exodus as it is comprised of two main sections, (1 - 31; 32 - 40), each with two subsections (A and B; A1 and B1):

A	1 – 24	Oppression, Redemption, Covenant
B	25 – 31	Planning a Place for Presence
A1	32 – 34	Sin, Redemption, Covenant
B1	35 – 40	Preparing a Place for Presence.[21]

As this story opens, the actors in the story are primarily Egyptians and Israelites, and God is hardly mentioned.[22] Exodus 1-2 is charged with a hidden presence working in and through the apparently primary actors there, in particular through the women.[23] Exodus 1:1-7 sounds two leading themes: children and land.[24] These themes have to do with our fundamental concerns to find and remain within a place where we can flourish and extend ourselves into the future.[25]

> Oppression in Egypt outline and context, Exodus 1.1 – 7: The Israelite's in Egypt increased in number. 1.8 – 22: The Egyptian King tried to control them: (a) by making the Israelite men work for the Egyptians (1.8-14). (b) by having Israelite boys killed when they were born (1.15 – 22). The beginning of the Book of Exodus links to the Book of Genesis. Exodus 1:1 reminds the reader of Genesis 37 – 50, the story of how Jacob's family went to Egypt and settled there. The account of the troubles suffered by the Israelites (Ex 1.8 – 22) introduced the story of how God delivered them (Ex 2.1 – 15.21).[26]
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> Moses before his call outline and context: Exodus 2.1 – 11: Moses was born. When he was three months old, a daughter of Pharoah found him hidden by the river. She brought him up as her son. 2.12 – 15a: Moses killed an Egyptian

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[21] Gerald J. Janzen, *Exodus*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 9.

[22] Janzen, *Exodus*, 13.

[23] Janzen, *Exodus*, 13.

[24] Janzen, *Exodus*, 14.

[25] Janzen, *Exodus*, 14.

[26] John H. Dobson, *A Guide to the Book of Exodus* (London, UK: SPCK Publishing, 1999), 10.

foreman who was beating an Israelite. 2.15b – 22: Moses escaped to Midian. He lived with Reuel, the Midianite priest. He married Zipporah, a daughter of Reuel. 2.23 – 25: God heard the prayer of the Israelites who were suffering in Egypt. The story in Exodus 2.1 – 3 follows the command in Exodus 1:22 that Israelite boys were to be thrown into the Nile. Exodus 2.23 – 25 recalls Exodus 1:8 – 14 and prepares the reader for the story of how God called Moses to deliver the Israelites (3.1 – 4.17).[27]

Exodus 3:1-15 reads,

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses,' And he said, 'Here I am,' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of the land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharoah to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharoah, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.' But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I Am has sent me to you.''[15] God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations'[28] (Ex 3:1-15).

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[27] Dobson, *A Guide to the Book of Exodus,* 15.

[28] Exodus 1:1-15, All scripture unless otherwise stated is from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

Exegesis

Shepherding is what Moses has been doing for as good long while. If one thinks about it, it is a good preparation for another kind of shepherding to which God will call Moses.[29] God does not reveal himself to Moses so spectacularly when Moses is praying, or fasting, or meditating, or engaging in some profound metaphysical thought. It happens while he is alone, working, and probably unexciting menial work at that.[30]

> On this particular day Moses leads his flock far beyond the usual grazing grounds, 'deep into the steppe.' 'Steppe' is often translated 'wilderness' or 'desert,' which suggest an arid wasteland. Here, however, midbãr suggest uncultivated, more remote pastureland. That this territory can hardly be 'desert' is proved by Exod. 34:3, which is speaking of this same area has God say to Moses, 'Not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain.' So, Moses is, geographically, out of his comfort zone, perhaps driving his sheep 'to the highlands after the lowland grass had dried up or had been consumed' (Greenberg 1969: 68).[31]

To call it "God's mountain" is proleptic, for that is what it will become when Moses comes a second time, with his people, to this place (Ex 19). But for now, it is just another hill.[32]

"The angel of the Lord" can be rendered "the messenger of the Lord." (Malachi," for example, means "my angel," or "my messenger"). It is unlikely the phrase to be a supernatural being distinct from God.[33] This "angel/messenger" appears to men (Abraham: Gn 22:11, 15; Jacob: Gn 31:11; 48:16; Moses: Ex 3:2; Gideon: Jgs 6:11;

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[29] Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011), 45.

[30] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 45.

[31] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 45.

[32] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 45.

[33] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 46.

Sampson's father: Manoah: Jgs 13:13, 15, 16 [2x]) and to women (Hagar: Gn 16:7, 9, 11; 21:17; and the mother of Sampson: Jgs 13:3, 6, 9).[34] Several of these references speak of angel/God/Lord as if interchangeable and undistinguishable, reinforcing the idea that the Lord himself is the angel, and the angel is the Lord himself.[35]

It is the bush, not the angel/messenger, that catches Moses's attention. Often, before God is able to say something to somebody, he must arrest that individual's attention in one way or another.[36]

> In mentioning that the 'Lord saw' Moses turn aside to see, he regarded him, we must suppose, as the Great Being who has manifested himself and is present in the works of creation; and in adding that 'God called' unto him, he had before his mind the supernatural, invisible sphere out of which the Eternal Omnipotent uttered his voice, *Moses*, *Moses,* as in Gen. xxii. This is the personal call with which the commission of Moses begins.[37]

With his curiosity aroused, Moses moves towards the "burning" bush. As he approaches, God addresses him by name. The twofold repetition of "Moses" resembles other occasions when God speaks to individuals (e. g. Gn 22:11; 46:2; 1 Sm 3:10; however, this pattern is not always adopted; cf. Gn 22:1).[38] The Lord had marked out his territory through the burning bush; Moses must respect this presence by taking off his sandals.[39]

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[34] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 46.

[35] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 46.

[36] Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary,* 47.

[37] James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Exodus, With A New Translation,"* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publisher, 1998), 38.

[38] T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 2*,* ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Dover Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2017), 84.

[39] Godfrey Ashby, *Exodus, Go Out and Meet God,* ed. Fredrick Carlson and George A. F. Knight (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 20.

Yahweh identifies himself by his past relationship with the patriarchs and, unusually, by his relationship with Moses' own ancestry — "your father" (v. 6). This is his accreditation, the witness of the past act.[40] Having identified himself by fire and by his past relationship, Yahweh now takes up the present, the here and now.[41] Yahweh tells Moses that he has both heard the cry of the Israelites and seen their oppression at the hands of the Egyptian slave drivers (v. 7), a point repeated at length in v. 9 for added emphasis.[42]

> Verses 7, 8a. God set forth His intentions as He commissioned Moses to be His agent in bringing Israel out of Egypt. Two considerations evidently motivated God as He began executing His plan to deliver His people. One was His compassion for His suffering people. He said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people.' The other consideration was His longstanding plan to deliver the people out of Egypt and bring them to the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:13-16; 46:1-4; 48:21; 50:24, 25). Consequently, God intended to deliver [Israel] from the power the Egyptians and bring them . . . to a land flowing with milk and honey.[43]

God reveals to Moses the utopian character of the promised land. It is a good and broad land. Its abundant fertility is expressed with the image "flowing with milk and honey," a common description in Deuteronomy (Dt 6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 31:20).[44] This phrase provided the Israelites with a vivid and happy impression of the land which they had never seen.[45]

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[40] Ashby, *Exodus, Go Out and Meet God,* 20.

[41] Ashby, *Exodus, Go Out and Meet God,* 21.

[42] Alexander, *Exodus,* 89.

[43] Coy D. Roper, *Exodus*, Truth for Today Commentary, ed. Eddie Cloer, David Stewart, Timothy Paul Westbrook, Don Shackelford, and Duane Warden (Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2008), 54.

[44] Thomas B. Dozeman, Exodus, *Eerdmans Critical Commentary,* ed. David Noel Freedman and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Cambridge, U.K.), 128.

[45] Benno Jacob and Walter Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1992), 58.

In case there is any doubt as to as to whether God knows what is happening to the people, he repeats himself in verse 9: "And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them."[46]

> When God's people suffer, they sometimes wonder whether God even cares. But the story of Israel in Egypt is a dramatic example of what is always the case: God knows exactly what his people are going through. He is well aware of what is happening to us. He sees our suffering. He also cares about it, which is why he responds to our cries for help. God is full of pity and compassion for the people he loves. What he said to the children of Israel he says to everyone of his children: 'I am concerned about your suffering.'[47]

The point is that God not only knew and cared about the plight of his people but was also planning to do something about it.[48]

In verse 10, we encounter one of the paradoxes of God's sovereign grace: God uses human beings – sinful human beings – to carry out his saving purpose.[49] Here we discover that God's call to Moses included not only his salvation but also his vocation — the specific task that God called him to accomplish for his glory.[50] Whatever our particular calling happens to be, it is a high calling because it was given to us by the Most High God. God himself has called us to do his work in the world.[51]

One can only image Moses's shock. He is leading a completely normal shepherd's life when, out of nowhere, God Himself appears to him, and asks him to lead

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[46] Philip Graham Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* ed. R. Kent Highs (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books), 84.

[47] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* 84.

[48] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory*, 86.

[49] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory*, 89.

[50] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory*, 90.

[51] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* 90.

the Israelites out of Egypt.[52] Who am I? This is not an existential question, but an expression of disbelief (cf. Jgs 6:15). Moses, unlike his early days in Egypt, has learned to distrust himself so thoroughly that he will incur God's anger (Ex 4:14).[53]

> Moses asked God, 'Who am I?' and 'Who are you?' These two questions come in verse 11 ('Who am I, that I should go to Pharoah and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?') and verse 13 (Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?') They are good questions a person can ask. Once we know how to answer them – once we know who we are and who God is – we can begin to live for God's glory.[54]

It is easy to see why Moses felt like he needed something more. He wanted the full weight of divine authority behind him. So, he asked God to reveal his very name.[55] Moses seems not to have known the name of the Lord. By asking God to reveal it, he was seeking to understand God's essence.[56]

Some scholars have pointed out that God's reply in Exodus 3:14 ("I am who I am") employs two identical or nearly identical verbs to reveal the divine name. Something, therefore, is defined by itself.[57] For us, this means we have the whole of Scripture as God's self-revelation, and we know Him truly, though never exhaustively, in

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[52] Dennis Prager, *The Rational Bible, Exodus, God, Slavery, and Freedom,* ed. Joseph Telushkin (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2018), 41.

[53] R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*: *An Introduction and Commentary,* Tyndale Old Testament Commentary Series, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 68.

[54] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* 91.

[55] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* 95.

[56] Ryken, *Preaching the Word Exodus Saved for God's Glory,* 95.

[57] Scott M. Langston, *Exodus Through the Centuries,* ed. John Sawyers, Christopher Rowland, Judith Kovacs, and David M. Gunn (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 61.

His word.[58] To reconstitute Israel as a covenanted community, it was necessary for Israel to separate itself from Egypt and, by means of long-neglected sacrifice, renew the covenant with God.[59]

Major Themes

There are three major themes we will look at in the book of Exodus. First, it proclaims Israel's redemption as part of the ongoing story of God's plan to save mankind by keeping His promises to Abraham. Exodus relates how God made Abraham's seed into a great nation, delivered the people from Egyptian bondage, and came to dwell with them.[60]

Second, it records the covenant that served as the basis for all of God's dealings with Israel from that point forward. The rest of the Old Testament is to be understood in terms of this covenant.[61] This is the covenant: God said that Israel would be His people if Israel would do His will. Israel agreed to those terms. God's covenant relationship with Israel provided the basis for the exhortations and condemnation given to Israel by the prophets.[62]

> Third, it contains the law of God, which resulted from the covenant. Since the making of the covenant and the giving of the Law followed the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the Book of Exodus reminded Israel that responsibilities

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[58] Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentary on the Pentateuch, Exodus* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2004), 37.

[59] Rushdoony, *Commentary on the Pentateuch, Exodus,* 38.

[60] Coy D. Roper, *Exodus*: *An Exegesis & Application of the Holy Scriptures,* Truth for Today Commentary, ed. Eddie Closer, David Stewart, Timothy Paul Westbrook, Don Shackelford, and Duane Warden (Searcy, AK: Resource Publications, 2008), 6.

[61] Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary,* 6-7.

[62] Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary,* 7.

> came with their redemption. Israel accepted those responsibilities when the people agreed to the terms of the covenant. The responsibilities themselves are spelled out in the Law given by God through Moses at Sinai.[63]

Word Study

There are some key words and phrases in Exodus 3:1-15 that convey a narrative of one's life as he/she navigates through life. The key words to be looked at in this study are, "exodus," "who am I," and "I Am Who I Am." The key words convey the importance of understanding, one being separated and called by God, who one is, who God is, and whose you are in the world.

In the *English Bible*, the name "Exodus" is derived from the Septuagint (LXX), the ancient Greek version of the Hebrew Bible. The book is named after its major event – – the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.[64] In the Hebrew Bible, this book is called after the first two words of the text, (*wĕ' ēlleh she moth*).[65] The only other use of the term *exodus* in Exodus occurs in 23:16, with reference to the "going out" of the year.[66]

In Exodus 3:11, Moses said to God, "Who am I?" In two ways, this highlights his lack of authority to undertake what God asked. First, as a fugitive from Egypt, how can he possibly confront Pharoah? Why would Pharoah listen to him? Second, why would the Israelites follow him out of Egypt?[67]

> In the light of his own personal circumstances, Moses' question "Who am I?' is very reasonable (cf. 1 Sam. 18:18; 2 Sam. 7:18). Moses is no longer the impulsive

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[63] Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary,* 7.

[64] Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary,* 1.

[65] Roper, *Truth for Today Commentary,* 2.

[66] Alexander, *Exodus,* i.

[67] Alexander, *Exodus,* 87.

> 'Egyptian prince' who once sought through violent action to assist 'his brothers' (cf. Exod. 2:11-12). By this stage in his life, he has resigned himself to being a 'Midianite shepherd,' 'His initial response is to voice his sense of humility and to stress his own unworthiness relative to the magnitude of the enterprise' (Cassuto 1967:36).[68]

In Exodus 3:13, Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?'"

> YHWH's reply in v. 14 is somewhat enigmatic. The Hebr. reads *'ehyeh 'ăšr 'ehyeh*, which is usually translated 'I AM WHO I AM' (e.g. ESV; NAB; NIV; RSV; this also reflects the Vg translation *ego sum qui sum*), but other translations are possible: e.g. 'I shall be who I shall be.' The difficulty in deciding how to translate this expression is due to the fact that the word *'ehyeh* is an impf. Verbal form in Hebr. While this often has a future sense, it may 'refer to a recurrent or continuing action or state, which can be expressed as a "timeless" present in English, and it can, especially in poetry, refer to the past' (G. I. Davis 2007: 150). Potentially, *'ehyeh* could be translated 'I was', 'I am' or 'I will be'.[69]

Conclusion

Exodus 3:1-15 is an insight into the prophetic activism lens of God's care, of whom He can use and His faithfulness to His word. God's care is demonstrated in the emphasis of the text, God hearing the cry of the Israelite people. God is inclined to care for those whom He has chosen, to whom He has called, to His word for His people.

"Exodus tells how Israel became a nation through the action of their God. It is Israel's foundation story, their identity document, telling them where they have come

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[68] Alexander, *Exodus,* 87.

[69] Alexander*, Exodus,* 88.

from and showing them their place in the world under God's sovereignty."[70] The role of the prophetic activist is to speak life to power. The prophetic activist should speak life to power in the youth the community, to understand who they are, but not to just realize who they are, but to allow them to walk in that light and know whose they are.

The opportunity to empower the youth of Lexington, Kentucky, with an understanding of themselves through the narrative story of the Israelite of God's care, call and faithfulness to them is an opportunity for the city itself. Exodus teaches of the deliverance of the Israelite nation and of God's presence in the lives of the Israelites and their obedience to Him. The Book of Exodus is "The picture of our spiritual journey out of the world of bondage to sin into the freedom of forgiveness and the full inheritance we have in Jesus Christ."[71]

Proverbs 22:6 tells us to, "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray." God is calling the youth of Lexington, Kentucky, from their anguish of bondage to senseless violence, from a life of purposelessness to a life of liberation and purpose. God wants the youth to set their feet on a new path in life, a life guided by Him.

Youth tend to create identity by the social groups they hang with coming up in life. Most time, not all, the person they think they are, is truly not who God is calling them to become. The prophetic activist is creating a safe place for these youth to explore their identity, explore their relationship with God, and to trust God at His word. Exodus shows us there are pitfalls in life; there are those who want you in bondage and will do

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[70] John Barton, G. I. Davis, R. N. Whybray, Walter J. Houston, Lester L. Grabbe, Terence E. Fretheim, and Christoph Bultmann, *The Pentateuch,* The Oxford Bible Commentary*,* ed. John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford, NY: Oxford Press, 2001), 92.

[71] Maxie D. Dunnam, *Exodus*, The Communicator's Commentary*,* ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 17-18.

everything in their power to keep you in bondage. This project will reinforce the value of life in the youth of Lexington, Kentucky. The biblical foundation offers a narrative of oneself to empower the youth of Lexington, Kentucky, in the area of identity and whom they belong to.

Understanding who they are and whose they are gives the youth a sense of pride in themselves. The understanding of how God views them as His child, as stated in the gospel according to John chapter one verse twelve, paints a different picture in the mind of the youth. A lot of our youth do not know who God is in reference to being their heavenly father, so we have to make the Bible and learning about God interesting and enjoyable for them. We have to show them in the Word of God where they can find scripture that shows their identity.

The training of our youth by trained mentors who look like them, and who have dealt with their own personal issues and traumas is a must. Our youth are hurting in more ways than one, and if we as mentors have not dealt with our own past issues, learned our own anger triggers and anger cues, then we can do more harm than good. Our youth need mentors who are healed or taking the necessary steps for their own healing process. As mentors dealing with youth in the stage of helping them recognize who they are and whose they are, the mentors also need to know themselves who they are and whose they are.

Mentors have to view this work as a calling and not just something to do. The calling of mentorship on the mentor points to their purpose. Youth recognize if you are there to truly help or you are there for other reasons not specific to them. When the work

of mentorship is viewed as a calling, it is hard to walk away from when times get hard with the youth.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

This historical foundation will highlight the life of Marcus Garvey, Pan-Africanism, the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association, and African Communities League, usually called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Juvenile Division. This historical foundation will review the educational opportunities, political and religious movement of Garveyism, and the state of Lexington, Kentucky at the present time. This historical foundation will also lay the groundwork and the historical context of Black youth in figuring out who they are, whose they are, and the calling on their life in Lexington, Kentucky.

> Garveyism resonated with the rapidly urbanizing black community and spread beyond the United States to the Caribbean, Latin American and Africa. Regardless of the locale, Garvey's UNIA promised black economic uplift via self-reliance, political equality via self-determination, and the liberation of Africa from European colonialism via Black army marching under the Red, Black, and Green, flag of Black manhood.[1]

Pan-Africanist idea first began to circulate in the mid-19th century in the United States, led by Africans from the Western Hemisphere. The most important early Pan-Africanists were Martin Delany and Alexander Crummel, both African Americans, and

[1] M. Simba, "Marcus Garvey (1887-1940)," BlackPast.org, February 5, 2007, https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/garvey-marcus-1887-1940/.

Edward Blyden, a West Indian.[2] The true father of modern Pan-Africanism was the influential W. E. B. Du Bois. Throughout his long career, Du Bois was a constant advocate for the study of African history and culture.[3] Among the more-important thinkers of the first decade of the 20th century was Jamaican-born Black nationalist Marcus Garvey. In the years after World War I, Garvey championed the cause of African independence, emphasizing the positive attributes of Black people's collective past.[4]

The Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) was originally conceived as a benevolent or fraternal reform association dedicated to racial uplift and the establishment of educational and industrial opportunities for blacks, taking Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute as a model.[5] The Juvenile Divisions, the youth corps of the Garvey movement, were affiliated with the local U.N.I.A. divisions and divided into classes according to age.[6] Although the U.N.I.A. did not have an explicit program against sexism, it did, through groups such as the Black Cross Nurses and the Universal Motor Corps, offer women a place of their own within the organization.[7]

Marcus Garvey valued education highly while growing up. He was, "dedicated to racial pride, economic self-sufficiency, and the formation of an independent

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[2] Kuryla, Peter, "Pan-Africanism," Encyclopedia Britannica, January 27, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Africanism.

[3] Peter, "Pan-Africanism."

[4] Peter, "Pan-Africanism."

[5] Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind," Aired February 12, 2001, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-unia/.

[6] Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind."

[7] Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind."

Black nation in Africa."[8] Garvey's political views were, "to unite all the Negro peoples of the world into one great body to establish a country and government absolutely their own" and to "establish a universal confederacy among the race, to promote race pride and to administer to and assist the needy."[9] In Kentucky, there were at least "eleven divisions of the UNIA in Benham, Clay, Coxton, Daniel Boone, Florence, Erlanger, Louisville, Madisonville, Sassafras and Sergent, as well as a chapter in the Oakland Addition (Louisville)."[10] Even though the Universal Negro Improvement Association was not a religion, many of the meetings looked like religious services. "The religious ethos of the UNIA meetings, which was set by the formal structure of the regular programs and by the language used by its officials, was further reinforced by the presence of chaplains at both local and national levels."[11]

Why I chose Garvey.

The reason I chose Marcus Garvey as my historical figure and his movement is because he spoke continuously to the struggles of the Black youth, their condition, and the plight of the Black community. Garvey realized early in his life who he was and whose he was while always trying to better himself and his family and then the Black

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[8] Encyclopedia Britannica, "Universal Negro Improvement Association," ed. he Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britanica.com/topic/Universal-Negro-Improvement-Association.

[9] Christina Bergmark, "The Politics of Marcus Garvey," May 18, 2012. https://socialistworker.org/2012/05/18/politics-of-garvey.

[10] Kentucky Divisions of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Notable Kentucky African Americans Database," https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/1769.

[11] Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, ed. Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, NJ: London, UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., and The American Theological Library Association, 1978), 29.

diaspora. Black youth of Lexington Kentucky need to understand who Marcus Garvey was and what he stood for. The struggles he went through, the battles he had to fight was not just from white people, but, from blacks as well.

In this foundational chapter I will highlight Marcus Garvey and how his life speaks to this subject: "if African American adult volunteers in Lexington, Kentucky, participate in spiritual and culturally based mentorship training programs, then there will be mentors available to guide and train youth about who they are spiritually and culturally and make better cognitive decision to not enter into the juvenile system." If African American youth understood who they are and whose they are, then their cognitive behavior would change. This unit will address Garvey's early life, speak to persons who influenced him, point out his contributions, and lastly, speak to persons and organizations that presently carry out his work.

The Life of Marcus Garvey

> On the Island of Jamaica – the Isle Springs – ninety-nine miles from Cuba, on the seventeenth day of August in 1887, was born to Marcus Garvey and his wife Sarah a baby boy, the eleventh child of the couple. Ma Garvey wanted him named Moses, as she liked Biblical names for her children, and had a hunch that this child would become a leader like Moses of old. But Pa Garvey had ideas about this little boy, too. He said the boy should be named Marcus after him, and maybe he would become Marcus Aurelius, believing in the worth of every human being because 'the Universe has need of them.' Pa Garvey believed in planetary influence; the child was born under the sign of Leo the Lion, when the sun was in its ascendancy, a most favorable omen. Eventually a compromise was reached, and the child was baptized as Marcus Mosiah Garvey, although many people called him Moses.[12]

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[12] John Henrik Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, ed. John Henrik Clarke and Amy Jaques Garvey (Prairie City, IL: The Dicker Press, 1978), 29.

Young Marcus Garvey spent his childhood in St. Ann's Bay, called the Garden Parish, because of its lush vegetation and good rainfall.[13] At fifteen Marcus was sent to learn printing at his grandfather Burrow's shop. There was a back room at the shop containing books, magazines, and old newspapers, where he could read and think deeply.[14] He admired leaders such as Cudjoe, Tacky, Sharp, Quaco, and Paul Bogle, who came down from Stony-Gut warning his people: "Remember your color and cleave to the blacks."[15]

> Moses read from a Jamaica *Advocate,* published by Dr. Robert Love, A Black man from Nassau. Dr. Love was a landed proprietor who qualified for the 'better class' category (those who ignored the Black masses) but he attended all sick people, even those who could not pay him, and published a newspaper that voiced the opinions of the submerged 'lower class.' The following is an excerpt from one of his editorials dated May 18, 1895:
>
> Some are whispering that we are dangerous. We don't care if we are. If to speak out thoughts freely and fearlessly – if to advocate the equal rights of all citizens – if to denounce oppression and wrong – if to teach the class to which we belong their rights and privileges, as well as their duties and responsibilities, if to do these is to be dangerous, then we wish to be [as] dangerous as we can be, and no power can arrest our action in this direction.[16]

These were the men who inspired Garvey and made him realize that the economic thralldom of the masses was part of a system to keep Black people down.[17] At eighteen, Marcus Garvey went to Kingston, the capital, and got a job at Benjamin's printery. He became involved in a printer's strike, and although he was young, he rallied the men.[18] In

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[13] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 30.

[14] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 32.

[15] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 32.

[16] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 32.

[17] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 33.

[18] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 33.

1910, Garvey joined the National Club; among the club's members were Sir William Morrison, S. A. G. Cox, Alexander Dixon, W. A. Domingo, S. M. DeLeon and J. Coleman Beecher.[19] The club provided Garvey with his first experience in newspaper publishing and campaigning for a political candidate.[20]

> I asked Beecher just before he died what impressed him most about Garvey, and he said: 'He was fiercely proud of being black. He carried a pocket dictionary with him and said he studied three of four words daily, and in his room, he would write a paragraph or two using these words.' DeLeon had this to say: 'He had a mature mind from the time he came to Kingston in his teens. He was always busy, planning and doing something for the underprivileged youth. Uplift work we called it, and he had us in it the shaft with him.'[21]

There was so much Garvey wanted to do for his people, and not having the means, he went to an uncle in Costa Rica who got him a job as timekeeper on a fruit farm. From there he moved on to Guatemala, Panama, Nicaragua, Bocas-del-Toro, South America – Ecuador, Chile, and Peru.[22] In all these republics Garvey tried to organize the West Indian immigrants and called on the British Consul to protect them.[23] Finally, Garvey felt that if he went to England, he might be able to get help for West Indian working in foreign lands. In England, he would contact men in high places as well as working-class people, none of whom knew what went on in the far-flung colonies of the Empire.[24]

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[19] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 33.

[20] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 33.

[21] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 33-34.

[22] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 34.

[23] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 34.

[24] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 35.

Garvey worked around the docks in London, Cardiff, and Liverpool and gained a wealth of information from African and West Indian seaman. As he told them, they told him; and he concluded that suffering was indeed the common lot of the race, no matter where they lived.[25] The seaman told him where to find Duse Mohammed Ali, an Egyptian nationalist, who did not confine his nationalism to Egypt. His place was a center for Africans and Asians. He published *The African and Orient Review.*[26] Garvey realized why India was called "the brightest jewel in the British Crown." Thus, he became fully involved in all that went on there and contributed his views to the magazine.[27]

> Rumblings of war were in the air, and early in 1914 Garvey returned to Jamaica and set up an organization for members of the Black race. He called it the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League. Its motto – One God! One Aim! One Destiny! Africanus was the cable address, and the officers were: Marcus Garvey, President and Traveling Commissioner; T. A. McCormack, Secretary; and J. W. Milburn, Treasure.[28]

Garvey landed in New York in March 1916. Harlem was a Black city, but most of the businesses were owned by Jews, Greeks, and Italians.[29] Garvey soon found that Negroes in the South were heading North, leaving behind Jim Crow, lynching, peonage farms, disenfranchisement, serfdom, and misery: but how did they fare in the industrial cities and towns of the North? When the thrifty ones bought houses through white agents and moved into white areas, they lived in fear of being bombed out, of their family being

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[25] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 35.

[26] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 35.

[27] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 36.

[28] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 36.

[29] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 36.

threatened on the streets.[30] The preachers and ward politicians were designated as leaders for these new Northerners. There was no all-Negro organization; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was, and is, an interracial organization.[31]

> Garvey started his campaign in Harlem as a soapbox speaker on street corners. Later on, he got the use of St. Maker's Hall for special meetings. He rallied the people around him because he was talking about a positive international program, not just an anti-lynching protest. He opposed integration of the races as racial suicide and an easy solution put forward by persons who did not have the courage and determination to keep on fighting for their rights to live and work as other racial groups did.[32]

Pan-Africanism

> Pan-Africanism can be said to have its origins in the struggles of the African people against enslavement and colonization Dr. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem (Pan-Africanism: Politics, Economy and Social Change in the twentieth Century). And this struggle may be traced back to the first resistance on slave ships – rebellions and suicides – through the constant plantation and colonial uprisings and the 'Back to Africa' movement of the nineteenth century.[33]

Pan-Africanism was initially an anti-slavery and anti-colonial movement amongst Black people of Africa and the diaspora in the late 19th century.[34] For Pan-Africanists such as Edward Wilmot Blyden, part of the call for African unity was to return the

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[30] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 37.

[31] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 37.

[32] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 37.

[33] PADEAP, 2011, "The History of Pan Africanism," Last modified 2011, https://www.padeap.net/the-history-of-pan-africanism.

[34] Alistair Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism," Updated November 21, 2019, https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-pan-africanism-44450.

diaspora to Africa, whereas others, such as Frederick Douglass, called for the rights in their adopted countries.[35]

> Blyden and James Africanus Beale Horton, working in Africa, are seen as the true fathers of Pan-Africanism, writing about the potential for African nationalism and self-government amidst growing European colonialism. They, in turn, inspired a new generation of Pan-Africanists at the turn of the twentieth century, including J. E. Casely Hayford, and Martin Robinson Delany (who coined the phrase 'Africa for the Africans' later picked up by Marcus Garvey.[36]

Pan-Africanism gained legitimacy with the founding of the African Association in London in 1897, and the first Pan-African conference held, again in London, in 1900.[37] Between the World Wars, Pan-Africanism was influenced by communism and trade unionism, especially through the writings of George Padmore, Isaac Wallace-Johnson, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Paul Robeson, C.L.R. James, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Walter Rodney.[38] Pan-Africanism had expanded out beyond the continent into Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas.[39]

We can turn now to the relationship that emerged between the young Garvey and the central figure of Pan-African thought and expression of the pre-1914 period, Duse Mohammed Ali.[40]

> Duse Muhammed Ali was a Sudanese Egyptian who had lived in England for many years. He was both a journalist and stage-actor. Real prominence came his way in 1911 with the publication of his book, *In the Land of the Pharaohs,* reputedly the first history of Egypt written by an Egyptian and a work that was critically received. The acclaimed received by the book brought with it the offer,

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[35] Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism."

[36] Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism."

[37] Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism."

[38] Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism."

[39] Bobby-Evans, "The Origins, Purpose, and Proliferation of Pan-Africanism."

[40] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 41.

> ironically, to organize entertainment from the First Universal Race Congress, also held in 1911. Many significant Pan-African figures attended the Congress, among them W. E. B. Dubose from America, Tengo Jabavu from South Africa, Antenor Firmin and ex-President Legitime from Haiti, Theophilus E. S. Scholes of Jamaica, and Pastor Majola Agbebi of the Niger Mission representing the venerable Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden.[41]

The source of Garvey's emergent Pan-Africanist thinking could be gleaned from the pages of *Ethiopia Unbound – Studies in Race Emancipation* by the Gold Coast lawyer, J. E. Casely Hayford.[42] Published in 1911, the novel focused on an African student whose intellectual consciousness is awakened in London and who then returns to lead a political struggle in his native Gold Coast.[43] But the script would be drawn from his study of the seminal works of African and West Indian writers in the pages of the *African Times and Orient Review* by such men like the coruscating and intense Liberian scholar, Edward Wilmot Blyden, who was internationally respected for his work on *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race.*[44] In his relatively brief period in London, Garvey had shown an amazing capacity to absorb political tracts, theories of social engineering, African history, and Western Enlightenment.[45]

Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League, usually called the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)

> As Marcus Garvey returned to Jamaica in 1914, after four years in Central America and Europe, he came upon the autobiography of Booker T. Washington,

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[41] Clarke, *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa*, 41-41.

[42] Colin Grant, *Negro with A Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc. 2008), 53.

[43] Grant *Negro with A Hat*, 53.

[44] Grant, *Negro with A Hat*, 53.

[45] Grant, *Negro with A Hat*, 54.

> the conservative dean of American black leaders. It was while reading *Up from Slavery*, Garvey said, that he developed his vision for the Universal Negro Improvement Association. 'Where is the black man's President, his ambassador, his country, his men of big affairs? I could not find them,' he said, and then declared, 'I will help make them.'[46]
>
> Initially, he kept very much with Washington by encouraging his fellow Jamaicans of African descent to work hard, demonstrate good morals and a strong character, and not worry about politics as a tool to advance their cause. Garvey did not make too much headway in Jamaica and decided to visit America in order to meet Booker T. Washington and learn more about the situation of African Americans. By the time Garvey arrived in America in 1916, Washington died, but Garvey decided to travel around the country and observe African Americans and their struggle for equal rights.[47]

After surveying the racial situation in America, Garvey was convinced that integration would never happen and that only economic, political, and cultural success on the part of African Americans would bring about equality and respect.[48] His brand of nationalism had three components – unity, pride in the African cultural heritage, and complete autonomy. Garvey believed people of African descent could establish a great independent nation in their homeland of Africa.[49]

To promote unity, Garvey encouraged African Americans to be concerned about themselves first. He stated after the World War One that "[t]he first dying that is to be done by a black man in the future will be done to make himself free."[50] One of the

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[46] Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind," Aired February 12, 2001, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-unia/.

[47] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association," https://marcusgarveylives.wordpress.com/about/marcus-garvey-the-u-n-i-a/.

[48] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[49] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[50] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

reasons for Garvey's amazing success in the rapid organization of the Negro masses was his establishment in January 1918, of the *Negro World,* the UNIA's New York newspaper.[51] Within the space of a few months the *Negro World* became one of the leading Negro weeklies, and as such it proved to be a most effective instrument for the promulgation of Garvey's program.[52]

In 1919, Garvey's organizational activities had progressed enough for him to purchase a large auditorium located at 114 West 138 Street in Harlem.[53] Rechristened Liberty Hall, this building became the American headquarters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.[54] Liberty Hall in Harlem came to symbolize the movement, and soon local Liberty Halls sprang up in other areas where Garvey's ideas on race redemption took root and flourished.[55] Garvey proclaimed "black is beautiful" long before it became popular in the 1960's. He wanted African Americans to see themselves as members of a mighty race.[56]

> The work of the Universal Negro Improvement Association was more than speeches and meetings, however. Sometime early in 1919 Garvey projected the idea of an all-Negro steamship company that would link the colored peoples of the world in commercial and industrial intercourse. The bold bid to enter the white-dominated maritime industry quickly caught hold of the popular imagination and for several months money was collected at the U.N.I.A. meetings to purchase ships for this promised Black Star Line. News of this activity soon reached the ears of Edwin P. Kilroe, assistant district attorney of New York, and

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[51] E. David Cronon and John Hope Franklin*, Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Madison, WI: and London, UK: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 45.

[52] Cronon and Franklin, *Black Moses*, 45.

[53] Cronon and Franklin, *Black Moses*, 49.

[54] Cronon and Franklin, *Black Moses*, 49.

[55] Cronon and Franklin, *Black Moses*, 50.

[56] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

> in June 16, 1919, he called Garvey in and warned him not to attempt to sell stock unless the Black Star Line was organized as a legitimate business enterprise. In compliance, ten days later Garvey formally launched the Black Star Line by securing a broad charter of incorporation from the State of Delaware, whose friendly laws had long attracted businessmen and industrial entrepreneurs. Under its charter the Black Star Line was explicitly authorized to own, charter, operate, and navigate ships of various types in any part of the world and to carry passengers, freight, and mail.[57]

Garvey's black nationalism blended with his Christian outlook rather dramatically when he claimed that African Americans should view God "through our own spectacles." If whites could view God as white, then blacks could view God as black.[58] Garvey was not interested in promoting hope in the afterlife. Success in this life was the key. Achieving economic, cultural, social, and political success would free African Americans in this life.[59]

Garvey's speeches and editorials were sermonic in style, containing extensive use of biblical references and religious imagery. Every address was a call to commitment, determination, and sacrifice, with a not infrequent note of apocalypticism creeping in.[60] *The Negro World* itself was referred to as the "Testament of the U.N.I.A." because, according to one official, it "has been the greatest missionary in building up divisions and making converts to the cause outside of New York City."[61]

> Garvey took care to integrate religious imagery into his conceptualization of the 'new nationality.' The official motto of the UNIA was 'One God! One Aim! One

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[57] Cronon and Franklin, *Black Moses*, 50.

[58] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[59] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[60] Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement,* ed. Kenneth E. Rowe (Metuchen, NJ: London, UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. and The American Theological Library Association, 1978), 25.

[61] Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, 28.

> Destiny!' The motto was to be found emblazoned on the official banner, on the UNIA stationary, and on the letterhead of the *Negro World*, and it was repeated at every meeting of the Association. The notion of a unified religious faith for all Black persons implied by the words 'One God' was a perennial topic for discussion at International Conventions and was a theme to which Garvey frequently returned in his speeches.[62]

Garvey's message of black nationalism and a free black Africa met considerable resistance from other African American leaders. W. E. B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson of the NAACP, and Chandler Owens and A. Philip Randolph of the publication *Messenger*, had their doubts about Garvey.[63] In 1924, DuBois claimed that "Marcus Garvey is the most dangerous enemy of the Negro race in America and in the world."[64] The federal government also took an interest in Garvey, and in 1922, indicted him for fraud. He was eventually sentenced to prison and began serving his sentence in 1925.[65] With his imprisonment and deportation, his organization in the United States lost much of its momentum. Garvey spent the last years of his life in London and died in 1940.[66]

UNIA Juvenile Division

> The infant class (ages one through seven) studied the Bible, the doctrine of the U.N.I.A., and the history of Africa. After the age of seven, the children were segregated by sex. Girls were taught sewing, boys' woodcraft, and both received further instruction in black history and etiquette. After the age of thirteen, boys received military training to prepare them for membership in the African Legion,

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[62] Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement*, 33-34.

[63] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[64] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., *"*Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[65] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[66] Marcus Garvey & The U.N.I.A., "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

> while girls learned hygiene and domestic science in order to prepare them to be Black Cross Nurses. The superintendent of each local division was the Lady Vice President of the division at large, and teachers were chosen from the adult auxiliaries. The juvenile division took part in U.N.I.A. parades; the boys marching in blue uniforms and the girls in green dresses.[67]
>
> Many of the UNIA's goals, such as empowerment and solidarity, were realized through various auxiliary groups that offered opportunities for advancement, education, skill-building, and community care to its members. The Universal African Legion was an auxiliary group for men with militaristic focus on discipline and protection. The Juvenile Branch was created to cultivate leadership for youth members. One of the most popular auxiliary groups was the Black Cross Nurses (BCN), an organization for Black women inspired by the Red Cross. The BCN didn't provide profession training; Black women were banned from studying nursing in Canada until the late 1940's. However, it allowed Black women to develop skills, promote health and hygiene, and provide care to their communities in many ways.[68]
>
> The Universal African Legion had a similar purpose; it empowered Black men by allowing them to embody traditional gender roles as protectors and defenders. The halls and their auxiliary groups were central to maintaining the growth and safety of individual Black communities while strengthening global solidarity between UNIA divisions.[69]

The African Legion provided protection for the UNIA-ACL and the Black community against racist and unjust physical aggression. The sole purpose of the military was to prepare young black men for the redemption of Africa and for the protection of the UNIA members across the world.[70] The Legion was a uniformed army with a military chain of command and stratification. It instilled discipline and respect to young black men all over the globe.[71]

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[67] Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind."

[68] Past Stories, Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, "Marcus Garvey and the UNIA," https://www.myseumoftoronto.com/programming/marcus-garvey-and-the-unia/.

[69] Past Stories, Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, "Marcus Garvey and the UNIA."

[70] Universal Negro Improvement Association – African Communities League, "African Legion," https://uniabarcaclarke.com/african-legion/.

[71] Universal Negro Improvement Association – African Communities League, "African Legion."

The Black Cross Nurses was established to provide health services and education to people of African descent. In 1920, Henrietta Vinton Davis established the Black Cross Nurses (BCN) in Philadelphia as an auxiliary of (UNIA).[72] Local chapters were established with a matron, head nurse, secretary, and treasure to provide health services and hygiene education to black community members.[73] Doctors, nurses, and lay practitioners took courses ranging from six months to a year to ensure that standardized care was being given.[74]

Garvey's Contribution to my Theme

Garvey contributes to my theme is his understanding of who he was and who's he was. Garvey understood at an early age in life the plight of the Black community and the hardships it faces educationally, politically, and even spiritually. He wanted better for the Black race as a whole. African American youth in Lexington, Kentucky, are demonstrating deviant behavior because they do not know who they are. They do not understand the rich heritage they have; they do not know who they are in the sight of God and whose they are as His children — Marcus Garvey did.

Marcus Garvey understood togetherness — bringing the black community together as one unit. "Adopting the motto of, 'One God, One Aim, One Destiny,' it declared its commitment to 'establish a brotherhood among the black race, to promote a

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[72] AAREG Inspiring the Young Minds of our Future, "The Black Cross Nurses Association Formed," https://aaregistry.org/story/the-black-cross-nurses-formed/.

[73] AAREG Inspiring the Young Minds of our Future, "The Black Cross Nurses Association Formed."

[74] AAREG Inspiring the Young Minds of our Future, "The Black Cross Nurses Association Formed."

spirit of race pride, to reclaim the fallen and to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa."[75] By creating the Red, Black and Green flag, Garvey was trying to create pride for the people. "The three colors of the flag represent; red: the blood that unites all peoples of Black African ancestry and shed for liberation; black: black people whose existence as a nation, though not a nation-state, is affirmed by the existence of the flag; and green: the abundant natural wealth of Africa."[76] Garvey spoke to unity, pride, and commitment to one another and their identity. This is something our African American youth in Lexington, Kentucky, are missing. "Understanding that the theoretical construct of national identity is about collectivity, Garvey's teachings will help to provide that cognitive, moral, and emotional connection, which must be made between an individual and his/her broader community or category."[77]

Organizations that Carry out Garvey's Work Today

Although his legacy as a leader and activist lives on, Garvey's separatist and Black Nationalist views were not embraced by many of his peers.[78] However, Garvey's supporters prefer to focus on his key message, which was steeped in Black pride. He is credited with coining the phrase "Black is beautiful."[79] Later, groups such as Father

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[75] Marcus Garvey, "One Aim, One God, One Destiny," https://historydraft.com/story/marcus-garvey/one-aim-one-god-one-destiny/623/12310.

[76] Pancocojams, "The History & Meaning of the African Red, Black, and Green Flag," ed. Azizi Powell, January 21, 2014, https://pancocojams.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-history-meaning-of-red-black-and.html.

[77] Melody Cammock-Gayle, "Why Marcus Garvey is still relevant today," Oct 21, 2013, https://jamaicaobserver.com/columns/why-marcus-garvey-is-still-relevant-today/.

[78] History.com "Marcus Garvey," History.com, updated November 2, 2022, https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/marcus-garvey#legacy-of-marcus-garvey.

[79] History.com, "Marcus Garvey."

Divine's Universal Peace Mission Movement and the Nation of Islam drew members and philosophy from Garvey's organization, and the UNIA's appeal and influence were felt not only in America but Canada, the Caribbean, and throughout Africa.[80] Garvey's message had a tremendous influence on the Rastafarians as well.[81] Much of what Garvey said concerning racial pride and the potential for great racial success can be heard in later figures such as Malcolm X and even Stokely Carmicheal, leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).[82]

Conclusion

Marcus Garvey exemplifies the spirit of how our Black youth of Lexington, Kentucky, should aspire to have. He understood who he was as he was growing up and had a spirituality that showed through the work that he did. At an early age, Garvey traveled and he soaked up everything he read, expanding his own education. "Garvey's goal was to create a separate economy and society run for and by African Americans."[83]

Our youth need to look at Marcus Garvey's life and what he stood for and how he went about making change for himself and his community. "Garvey laid forth a vision for a new world — a world where all people of African origin, on every continent, were

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[80] David Van Leeuwen, "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association," Revised October 2000, https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/garvey.htm.

[81] Leeuwen, "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[82] Leeuwen, "Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association."

[83] Constitutional Rights Foundation 2023, "Marcus Garvey," https://www.crf-usa.org/black-history-month/marcus-garvey#:~:text=Garvey's%20goal%20was%20to%20create.free%20of%20white%20colonial%20rule.

united, self-sufficient, and proud."[84] The Black youth of Lexington, Kentucky, can learn pride for themselves and their community. The youth can learn the dignity of work and building up their families and community and come together as a whole to move themselves and community forward.

Once our Black youth realize who they are and whose they are, they can figure out what it is they are called to do. They can take pride in themselves and their actions and teach those who come after them to be better. They will be able to stand and say, in the words of Marcus Garvey, "I stand before you this afternoon as a proud black man, honored to be a black man, who would be nothing else in God's creation but a black man."[85]

Garvey's life also stood for Black excellence: Black excellence in self, Black excellence in business, Black excellence in economics, and Black excellence in politics and community. "Garvey's UNIA promised black economic uplift via self-reliance, political equality via self-determination, and the 'liberation of Africa from European colonialism via Black army marching under the Red, Black, and Green flag of Black manhood.'"[86] Black youth striving for Black excellence will push them for better education, along with a better relationship with family, friends, and their community. Our

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[84] Rund Abdelfatah, "'Black Moses' Lives On: How Marcus Garvey's Vision Still Resonates," February 11, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/02/08/965503687/marcus-garvey-pan-africanist#:~:text=He%20traveled%20across%20the%20United,called%20him%20%22Black%20Moses.%22.

[85] Abdelfatah, "'Black Moses.'"

[86] M. Simba, "Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Black Nationalist and Founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association," Social Welfare History Project, Last Modified November 10, 2022, https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/garvey-marcus/.

youth should take a more active role in politics and learning of government to help change the situations they grow up in and the community as a whole.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The theological authority in understanding oneself and prophetic activism supports the groundwork of this doctoral thesis and project in Lexington, Kentucky. The theological framework for this project will profess prophetic activism and break down the idea of social and urban responsibilities in Lexington, Kentucky, schools, and communities. Black liberation theology, the Black power movement, and Pan-Africanism ideology will support the bedrock of this project and will advocate for social and urban understanding of who our youth are in the Black communities and society.

Black liberation theology, simply put, is God's impact on liberating, or liberation, of Black people in society. "Black theology is biblical theology seeking to create new value-perspective for the oppressed, it is revolutionary theology. It is a theology which confronts white society as the racist Antichrist, communicating to the oppressor that nothing will be spared in the fight for freedom."[1] What is the importance of Black liberation and does it hold any value is the question that needs to be asked. In W. E. B. Du Bois book, *The Souls of Black Folks*, DuBois states:

> After the Egyptian and Indian, Greek, and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in

[1] James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (San Francisco, CA: A Division of Harper Collins Publisher, 1969), 135.

> this American world, – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One never feels his two-ness, – a American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.[2]

James Come explains that at the core of Black liberation theology is an effort – in a white dominated society, in which black has been defined as evil – to make the gospel relevant to the life and struggles of American Blacks, and to help Black people learn to love themselves.[3] Dwight Hopkins, a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, says Black liberation theology often portrays Jesus as a brown-skinned revolutionary.[4] The central text for Black liberation theology can be found in Chapter 4 of Luke's gospel, where Jesus outlines the purpose of his ministry. "Jesus says my mission is to eradicate poverty and to bring about freedom and liberation for the oppressed," Hopkins says.[5] "And most Christian pastors in America skip over that part of the book."[6]

Black power means black freedom, Black self-determination, wherein Black people no longer view themselves as without human dignity but as men, human beings

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[2] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* ed. Stanley Appelbaum (Chicago, IL: 1994), 2.

[3] NPR, "Black Liberation Theology, in its Founder's Words," March 31, 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/03/31/8923611/black-liberation-theology-in-its-founders-words.

[4] Barbara Bradley Hagerty, "A Closer Look at Black Liberation Theology," NPR, March 18, 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/03/31/8923611/black-liberation-theology-in-its-founders-words.

[5] Barbara Bradley Hagerty, "A Closer Look at Black Liberation Theology," NPR, March 18, 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/03/31/8923611/black-liberation-theology-in-its-founders-words.

[6] Barbara Bradley Hagerty, "A Closer Look at Black Liberation Theology," NPR, March 18, 2008, https://www.npr.org/2008/03/31/8923611/black-liberation-theology-in-its-founders-words.

with the ability to carve out their own destiny.[7] Black power is analogous to Albert Camus understanding of the rebel. "The rebel says 'No' and 'Yes.' He says 'No' to conditions considered intolerable, and 'Yes' to that something within him which 'is worthwhile' . . . and which must be taken into consideration."[8]

Pan-Africanism ideology is the notion that all African people on the continent and throughout the African Diaspora share cultural bonds and a collective goal for liberation and advancement around the world with Africa as the homeland for African and the Diaspora.[9] Black people deserve nothing less than everything. This was Marcus Garvey's simple, uncompromising message. His speeches on Pan-Africanism – the vision of a world where all people of African origin, on every continent, were united, self-sufficient, and proud – made him a powerful Black voice in the 20th century.[10]

> Pan-Africanist cultural thinking re-emerged with renewed forces in the United States in the late 1960's and '70s as one of the manifestations of the Black Power movement. By the early 1970s, it has become relatively common for African Americans to investigate their African cultural roots and adopt African forms of cultural practice, especially African styles of dress.[11]

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[7] James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (San Francisco, CA: A Division of Harper Collins Publisher, 1969), 6.

[8] N'Kosi Oates, "James Cone: A Black Theologian's Reflection," *Journal of Africana Religions* 7, no. 2 *(*2019): 282-86, JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.5325/jafrireli.7.2.2019.0282.

[9] Jessica Ann Mitchell Aiwuya, "What is Pan Africanism?" NBCI TRUST, https://www.nbci.org/what-is-pan-africanism/#:~:text=As%20an%20ideology%2C%20Pan%20Africanism%20is%20the%20notion,as%20the%20homeland%20for%20Africans.

[10] Rund Abdelfatah, Ramtin Arablouei, Laine Kaplan-Levenson, Julie Cane, Lawrence Wu, Kumari Devarajan, Victor Yvellez, Mansee Khurana, and Casey Miner, "Marcus Garvey: Pan-Africanist (2021)," NPR, February 17, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/02/14/1080665553/marcus-garvey-pan-africanist-2021.

[11] Magedi Mmetoane, "Politics: What Is A Pan-Africanism? As A Political Ideology?" UBUNTU National Institute of South Africa, June 3, 2020, https://www.ubuntunationalinstitute.wordpress.com/2020/06/03/politics-what-is-a-pan-africanism-as-a-political-ideology/.

Theological Themes

Black Liberation Theology

There is a need for Black theology, a theology whose sole purpose is to apply the freeing power of the gospel to Black people under white oppression.[12] Black liberation and Black power go hand in hand. James Cones said, "Black Theology and Black Power came out of the context of the civil rights and Black Power movements, and it emerged in part of the riots in Detroit in July of 1967."[13]

> The 'Black' in Black theology represented Malcolm X and the Blackness inside of me. The 'theology' represented Martin King [and] the Christian inside of me. I was trying to write theology that would speak to the spirit of the times in my community, and I wanted to share that one can be both Black and Christian, and here's how you do it.[14]

> What may be called the liberation tradition in black religion also begins with the determination to survive, but because it is exterior rather than primarily interior (and for that reason its carriers find more space in which to maneuver), it goes beyond strategies of sheer survival to strategies of elevation – from 'make do' to 'must do more.' Both strategies are basic to Afro-American life and culture. They are intertwined in complex ways throughout the history of the diaspora. Both are responses to reality in a dominating white world. Both arise from the same religious sensibility and inheritance that took institutional form in Afro-Christian and Afro-Islamic cults and sects from the mid-eighteenth century onward.[15]

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[12] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 31.

[13] Oates, "James Cone: A Black Theologian's Reflection," 282- 86.

[14] Oates, "James Cone: A Black Theologian's Reflection," 282-86.

[15] Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism, An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 227.

Black Power, even in its most radical expression, is not the antithesis of Christianity, nor is it a heretical idea to be tolerated with painful forbearance. It is, rather, Christ's central message to twentieth-century America.[16]

Black Power — to what "objective" does it point? What does it mean when it used by its advocates? It means complete emancipation of Black people from white oppression by whatever means Black people deem necessary.[17] In short, as Stokely Carmicheal would say, "Black Power means T.C.B., Take Care of Business – black folk taking care of black folks' business, not on the terms of the oppressor, but on those of the oppressed."[18] Chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering people. Action, self-reliance, the vision of self, and the future have been the only means by which the oppressed have seen and realized the light of their own freedom.[19] The basic orientation of the liberation tradition was not so much to survive as to liberate by elevating and advancing the American people of African descent in the United States.[20]

Just as white theology has its Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Wesley, so Black theology has its David Walker, Nathaniel Paul, Richard Allen, Sojourner Truth, and W. E. B. Du Bois.[21] Several of those names remind us that not all Black thinkers for whom religion was a critical resource were members of the clergy. Nevertheless, almost all were

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[16] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* ii.

[17] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 6.

[18] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 6.

[19] Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Emancipated from Mental Slavery: Selected Sayings of Marcus Garvey* (Silver Springs, MD: The Mhotep Corporation, 2016), 12.

[20] Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism,* 229 -230.

[21] Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism,* 236.

conditioned by religious sentiments in the Black community, and they reflected the distinctive spirituality that is of the nature of Black religion and philosophy.[22]

Therefore, it is appropriate to ask: Is it possible for men to be really Black and still feel any identity with the biblical tradition expressed in the Old and the New Testaments?[23] Is there any relationship at all between the work of God and the ghetto? Must Black people be forced to deny their identity in order to embrace the Christian faith?[24] It is ironic that America with its history of injustice to the poor, (especially the Black man and the Indian), prides itself as being a Christian nation.[25] When Black people begin to hear Jesus' message as contemporaneous with their life situation, they will quickly recognize what Jürgen Moltmann calls the "political hermeneutics of the gospel." Christianity becomes for them a religion of the protest against the suffering and affliction of man.[26]

> If the gospel of Christ, as Moltmann suggest, frees a man to be for those who labor and are heavily laden, the humiliated and abused, then it would seem that for the twentieth-century American message of Black Power is the message of Christ himself. To be sure, that statement is both politically and religiously dangerous; politically, because Black Power threatens the very structure of the American way of life; theologically, because it may appear to overlook Barth's early emphasis on 'the infinite qualitative distinction between God and man.' In this regard, we must say that Christ never promised political security but the opposite; and Karl Barth was mainly concerned with the easy identification of the work of God with the work of the state.[27]

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[22] Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism,* 236.

[23] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 31.

[24] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 31.

[25] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 36.

[26] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 37.

[27] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 37-38.

> If the gospel is a gospel of liberation for the oppressed, then Jesus is where the oppressed are and continues his work of liberation there. Jesus is not safely confined in the first century. He is our contemporary, proclaiming release to the captives and rebelling against all who silently accept the structures of injustice. If he is not in the ghetto, if he is not where men are living at the brink of existence, but is, rather, in the easy life of the suburbs, then the gospel is a lie. The opposite, however, is the case. Christianity is not alien to Black Power; it is Black Power.[28]

Black Power Movement

The actual phrase black power did not come into widespread usage until 1966. The ideas underlying black power were not new. As early as the 1940s, A. Philip Randolph, an African American labor activist, called for a march on Washington to pressure President Franklin D. Roosevelt to outlaw racial discrimination in federal employment.[29] In 1966, Stokley Carmicheal used the phrase, black power at a rally in Mississippi. It caught the nation's attention, but it meant different things to different people. Many whites who heard the phrase were uneasy. "They assumed that black power meant being anti-white and really sort of violent, foreboding."[30]

At its core, the Black power movement was a movement for Black liberation. What made the Black power movement different from the civil rights movement of the early 1960s, and frightening to white people, was that it embraced forms of self-defense.[31] The movement drew on Malcolm X's declaration of Black pride and his

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[28] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 38.

[29] Khan Academy, n.d., *Black Power,* https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/postwarera/civil-rights-movement/a/black-power.

[30] Karen Grigsby Bates, "Stokely Carmicheal, A Philosopher Behind The Black Power Movement," March 10, 2014, https://www.npr.org/section/codeswitch/2014/03/10/287320160/stokely-carmicheal-a-philosopher-behind-the-black-power-movement.

[31] Jameelah Nasheed, *"*The Black Power Movement: Understanding Its Origins, Leaders, and LegacyMay 21, 2021, https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-black-power-movement-origins-leaders.

understanding that the freedom movement for Black Americans was intertwined with the fight for global human rights and an anti-colonial future.[32] Black listeners heard a call "for cultural political and economic self-determination. The phrase resonated powerfully for a people who'd long been measured by arbitrarily set white standards and aesthetics."[33]

> The Black Power movement soon developed as a loosely organized network of organizations and individuals committed to radical social change and independence in black economic, political, social, and aesthetic life. The movement challenged the wholesale acceptance of integration as the appropriate strategy for black people in the U.S., advocating instead for various forms and levels of separation from the white mainstream.[34]

Working on the overarching premise that the civil rights movement failed to bring about real social change, black power advocates argued for alternative ways of achieving concrete social transformation. Black power activists were involved in movements for community control of resources, including public schools, local police forces, and social services.[35] The black power movement also gained steam from the international political environment. Black power activists placed the movement for black liberation in the United States in the broader context of African struggles for independence and anticolonialism movements across the globe.[36] While black power was not one united

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[32] Jameelah Nasheed, "The Black Power Movement: Understanding Its Origins, Leaders, and Legacy."

[33] Karen Grigsby Bates, *"*Stokely Carmicheal, A Philosopher Behind The Black Power Movement, "March 10, 2014, https://www.npr.org/section/codeswitch/2014/03/10/287320160/stokely-carmicheal-a-philosopher-behind-the-black-power-movement.

[34] Joyce M. Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), https://www.jstor.com/stable/10.7312/bell16260.6.

[35] Joyce M. Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), https://www.jstor.com/stable/10.7312/bell16260.6.

[36] Joyce M. Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), https://www.jstor.com/stable/10.7312/bell16260.6.

movement with a single clear ideology that was universally adhered to, it is clear that the movement arose in reaction to lagged progress in implementing civil rights gains and in opposition to the integrationist ideas that dominated the civil rights movement.[37]

The search for a Black aesthetic began and was inextricably tied to, according to Larry Neal, Addison Gayle, Hoyt W. Fuller, and Don L. Lee in *The Black Aesthetic*, the advent of the black power movement.[38] If Stokely Carmicheal and members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Community, the Congress of racial Equality, the Black Panther Party, and other participants in the Black Power Movement were busy creating and defending the Black community, the task of the defining it fell to the artists and intellectuals of the movement.[39]

> Had the movement failed to provide an answer to the question K. William Kgositsile emphatically posed in the Black Fire! anthology – 'Who are we? Who are we?' (228) – or to provide evidence to 'let Black people understand/ that they are the lovers and sons/ of lovers and warriors and sons/ of warriors,' as Amiri Baraka declared in 'The Black Arts Movement,' the political claims of the Black Power Movement to represent the community would have been without validity.[40]

Pan-Africanism Ideology

> When slavery was finally abolished, the concrete attachment of many New World Blacks to the African continent had been severed. Moreover, the racist ideology that has accompanied slavery and continued to run through the American postbellum society resulted in the negative stereotyping of Africa as a cannibal-infested darkness. Many Black Americans held on to such a derogatory image of the continent. Nevertheless, this attitude was also opposed by a growing number

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[37] Joyce M. Bell, *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), https://www.jstor.com/stable/10.7312/bell16260.6.

[38] Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 97, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wrht8.7.

[39] Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness,* 97.

[40] Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness,* 97.

> of outspoken and visible community representatives to whom African ancestry was by no means a stigma of failure but rather was a source of pride. Yet this did not mean that the nascent Black nationalism featured a unified opinion about the place of Africa as a *physical reality* in the lives of American Blacks. As Robert G. Weisbord observed, the connection of the diaspora to the continent has been, and continues to be, 'a complex and multifaceted conduit' (1973: 7).[41]

One of the greatest forebears of the Pan-African movement was Edward Wilmost Blyden. He was born in 1832 on St. Thomas of the Danish Virgin Islands.[42] Blyden was convinced that every race had its predestination and that every race had to make a genuine contribution toward the development and well-being of humankind.[43] When considering the influential status of Blyden's ideas in the ideological formulations of Pan-Africanism, we must pay attention to both the intellectual cul-de-sacs as well as the new horizons laid out in his work.[44]

Blyden was convinced that, for the Black race to advance, it was necessary to restore African self-esteem. To him, this self-confidence should be founded on the greatest of ancient African civilizations (Egypt).[45] In an arousing lecture to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone, Blyden developed his concept of the African Personality, which, more than fifty years later, would be taken up by Kwame Nkrumah to serve as the cultural foundation of the new, continental Pan-Africanism.[46]

> Equipped with the rhetorical skills of his background as a Christian clergyman (he was a Presbyterian minister), Blyden paralleled the destiny of the Black man

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[41] Katharina Schramm, *African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage,* ed. Ruth Whitehouse (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010), 39-40.

[42] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 40.

[43] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 41.

[44] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 41.

[45] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 40.

[46] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 42.

> [*sic!*] to that of Jesus Christ: 'The glory of the African . . . has been the glory of suffering – the glory of the cross – the glory of the Son of Man – the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But . . . the Cross precedes the Crown.' One of the most striking biblical references to suffering is the exodus of the ancient Israelites from Egypt – a crucial narrative that has been appropriated widely in Black movements from early Pan-Africanism to the Rastafarians and the Black Hebrew Israelites. Here, the biblical story becomes associated with the African destiny, and the mythical Exodus finds its parallel in the transatlantic slave trade and subsequent bondage.[47]

Blyden was convinced that the only solution for Black people was to go and "possess the land."[48] Blyden, as a devoted Christian, favored an independent African church that would take into account African forms of worship and thereby gradually "bring them [from example, the 'backward' Africans] to a knowledge of the truth."[49] Blyden pioneered this return movement; in 1851, he moved to the recently founded Republic of Liberia, and in 1871, he relocated to Sierra Leone, where he died in 1912.[50]

The controversy over names in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America reveals important ideological and organizational development in Afro-American life. At the heart of the controversy is the issue of identity, individual and collective, important to Afro-American nationalism, and integrationists alike.[51] Among Negro peoples, a man's name is often identified with his very soul, and often with the souls of the ancestors. Parents name children after relatives, heightening the spiritual significance

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[47] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 42.

[48] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 43.

[49] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 43.

[50] Schramm, *African Homecoming,* 43.

[51] Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (Oxford, UK: University Press, Inc., 2013), 218, ProQuest eBook Central.

of their names, all the more after the death of a relative.[52] As for Black people not born in Africa, resentment at not having a surname and having a Christian name of another's choosing were causes for distress.[53]

> While the African was enslaved by people who attached no positive importance to the names of their captives, and while Americans did not attach as much importance to names as Africans did, it would be a mistake to discount their significance in the West. Freud has written that the 'twisting round of a name when it is intentional amounts to an insult: and it might well have the same significance in a whole number of cases where it appears in the form of an unintentional slip of the tongue.' Moreover, to distort another's name can in certain circumstances mean that the distorter inwardly despises the person whose name it belongs to. If in Freudian terms even simple distortions of names, conscious and unconscious (slips of the tongue), constitutes acts of aggression, then the act of denying a whole people their names and giving them new ones is a language – and only partial names as that – must be regarded as a serious act of aggression, as a reflection of their subordinate state.[54]

Theological Issues

The ideas of Black Liberation Theology (BLT),with its independence, "are rejected in sophisticated ways in post-1994 South Africa or co-opted (*sympathized with*), with very little expressions of *solidarity* with the strong thoughts of this paradigm."[55] "This rejection of condescending and patronizing white responses to black suffering is a continuation of the rejection of 'white liberals' by Biko (1978) and the Black

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[52] Stuckey, *Slave Culture,* 220.

[53] Stuckey, *Slave Culture,* 220.

[54] Stuckey, *Slave Culture,* 222.

[55] Johannes Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," *Hervormde Theologies Studies* 78, no. 3 (2022): 3, https://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https//www.proquest. com/scholarly-journals/white-responses-black-theology-revisiting/docview/2640198291/se-2 https://doi.org/ 10.4102/ hts.v78i3.6945.

Consciousness movement at large."[56] Kritzinger (1988) puts it this way: "[*This*] is not intended as a separate white theology which falls into the trap of apartheid all over again, but a theology which is intimately related to Black Theology, and which unfolds in constant dialogue with it".[57] Vuyani Vellem states, "Comprehensively speaking, BLT is both epistemologically and hermeneutically un-West. It is anti-white, meaning, against whiteness, superiority, and inferiority."[58] In other words, BLT unmasks and undermines whiteness and can give rise to a liberating white Christianity if it is taken seriously by white theologians.[59]

> The *sympathy* response cannot be neatly distinguished from the previous one, since some theologians moved from one to the other with time or made statements at different times that fit in both approaches. This approach judged that Black Theology made some valid points and that its rejection of white racism was valid, but it was one-sided and in danger of becoming 'merely a handmaiden of an ideological struggle.' Whereas the rejection response was driven by hostility, the sympathy response exhibited sometimes a chastened humility, at other times condescending paternalism, suggesting that black theologians should rather develop an 'indigenous' and 'healthy' *African* theology instead of being drawn into 'a racist and nationalist theology that could eventually overpower the gospel.'[60]

The "solidarity" response can be briefly summarized as a posture of deep listening, which "affirms the liberatory thrust of Black Theology and attempts to develop a *complementary* liberating ministry in the white community."[61] However, one should avoid the danger of self-justification and superiority by admitting that the other responses

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[56] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 3.

[57] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 3.

[58] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 3.

[59] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 3.

[60] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 2.

[61] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 2.

to BLT (rejection and sympathy) are not problems that "they" are having. But a constant temptation of every white theologian, since they represent the world of white privilege within LWT, attempts to render credible Christian witness.[62]

Ron Rhodes states, "It is difficult for a white person to critique Black theology. As I write, I am mindful of James Cone's conviction that any criticism of Black theology by a white theologian will be influenced by white racism and is thus invalid."[63] Is it legitimate to make the Black experience the fundamental criterion for interpreting Scripture?[64] Certainly, I do not wish to minimize the importance of the Black experience. But "imposing the Black experience (or any other experience – including feminist, gay, anti-supernatural, New Age, mystic, etc.) onto Scripture – robs Scripture of its intrinsic authority and distorts its intended meaning."[65]

> Theologians who make black experience all-determinative have, in a way, made the mistake some white racists did during the days of slavery — only in reverse. Just as some whites imposed their 'experience' as slave masters onto Scripture in order to justify slavery, so some blacks have imposed the 'black experience' onto Scripture to justify their radical views on liberation. Both positions have erred. For blacks to use such an experience-oriented methodology is to condone the very kind of method used by those who enslaved them. In my thinking, this is self-defeating at best.[66]

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[62] Kritzinger, "White Responses to Black Theology: Revisiting a Typology," 4.

[63] Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience," Christian Research Institute, June 9, 2009, Updated July 31, 2022, https://www.equip.org/articles/black-theology-black-power-and-the-black-experience/.

[64] Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience."

[65] Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience."

[66] Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience."

Theological Relevance of the Subject

The term prophetic activism is used to describe church activism that extends beyond the walls of the black church to reach all African American youth within the community in which the black church is anchored.[67] Black churches have served their communities in a way that combines an emphasis on spiritual development with active participation in worldly affairs.[68] During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, black churches transmitted a powerful message about the ability and necessity of religious institutions to become involved in social change.[69] The period of Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s illustrate how the Black church has been the center arena for activism and leadership.[70] The historical understandings of how the Black church leadership impacts collaborative efforts between the Black church and political/government institutions has been largely informed by the works of Black

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[67] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, introduction.

[68] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, 60.

[69] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, 61.

[70] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, 30.

male scholars who include: W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963), Carter G. Woodson)1875-1950), and Benjamin Mays (1894-1984).[71]

> In his book, *Mobilizing the Community to Help Students Succeed,* Hugh B. Price identifies three key areas that the black church can address in an effort to become prophetic activist as it relates to the education of African American students attending public schools. These three areas are: (1) boosting student motivation; (2) celebrating student achievement; and (3) promoting academic success.[72]

The cry for relevance fueled the cultural renaissance known as "black studies." Protest and pressure led to greater acknowledgement of previously denigrated or ignored aspects of the African American experience.[73] Most Black people recognized the need for more accurate and significant representation of African American life and culture in public school curricula. Despite the flourishing of Black mass movements, few school districts had revamped the Eurocentric content of classes in social studies, literature, and other subjects.[74] African American parents, educators, and community control advocates joined the fight for social and curricular relevance.[75]

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[71] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, 31.

[72] Diedria Howell Jordan, and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarhip (NCDOCKS), "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism," Diss., PhD, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2012, 64.

[73] Russell John Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6. ProQuest eBook Central, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/lib/dtl/detail.action?docID=430813.

[74] Rickford, *We Are an African People,* 47.

[75] Rickford, *We Are an African People,* 47.

Theological Engagement

It was not long before slave theology would give rise to black activism. There are many important figures who contributed to the cause of Black liberation throughout history. Some of them are Diedria Howell Jordan and NC Digital Online Collection of Knowledge and Scholarship (NCDOCKS), in their dissertation entitled "The Role of the Black Church in Socializing African American Students for School Success: A Collective Case Study into the Nature of Prophetic Activism." Other figures are Howard Thurman (1949), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), and Albert Cleage.[76] I would be remised if I did not mention W. E. B. Du Boise. For the first time in the history of Black religious thought, Black clergy (primarily educated, middle-class Black clergy) and Black theologians began to recognize the need for a completely new "starting point" in theology.[77] So, Black theologians began to re-read the Bible through the eyes of their slave grandparents and started to speak of God's solidarity with the oppressed of the earth.[78]

With its emphasis on Black racial identity, pride and self-determination, Black power influenced everything from popular culture to education to politics, while the movement's challenge to structural inequalities inspired other groups (such as Chicanos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and LGBTQ people) to pursue their own goals of

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[76] Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience," *Christian Research Journal* 13, no. 4 (Spring 1991): https://www.equip.org/articles/black-theology-black-power-and-the-black-experience/.

[77] Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience," *Christian Research Journal* 13, no. 4 (Spring 1991): https://www.equip.org/articles/black-theology-black-power-and-the-black-experience/.

[78] Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and the Black Experience," *Christian Research Journal* 13, no. 4 (Spring 1991): https://www.equip.org/articles/black-theology-black-power-and-the-black-experience/.

overcoming discrimination to achieve equal rights.[79] The concept of "Black Consciousness" implies awareness by Black people of the power they yield as a group, both economically and politically, and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facts of Black Consciousness.[80] "Liberation is not an afterthought, but the very essence of divine activity," asserted Rev. James H. Cone in 1970.[81]

Conclusion

The state of Black family life in America evokes grave concern and graver criticism.[82]

> From the suffering of children in families that struggle to gain sufficient economic support, to the difficult plight of single black women, to the unemployment and overincarceration of black males, the black family is buffeted by a host of brutal social facts that compromise its quality of survival and make a mockery of King's vision of a black Promised Land.[83]

Nearly 70% of Black children are born to single mothers, compared to 27% of white children, and 43% of Latinos.[84] In Kentucky, there are 36% of Black children living below the poverty line, compared to 20% White and 31% Latinx, and 28% of two or

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[79] Sarah Pruitt, "How the Black Power Movement Influenced the Civil Rights Movement," History, Updated April 16, 2021, https://www.history.com/news/black-power-movement-civil-rights.

[80] Kelebogile T. Resane, "Black Consciousness, Black Nationalism and Black Theology: Is there a possibility for theology of dialogue?" *HTS* 77, no. 3 (2021): https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i3.6418, https:www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-94222021000300023.

[81] National Museum of African American History and Culture, *"*Religion and Black Power," https://www.nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/religion-and-black-power.

[82] Michael Eric Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Lither King, Jr.'s Death and How It Changed America* (New York, NY: Basic Civitas Book, 2008), 101.

[83] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 101.

[84] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 102.

more races.[85] There's little doubt that the Black family is in big trouble.[86] But if any entity bears primary responsibility for destroying the Black family, it is not the Black family.[87]

We must be even more vigilant in pointing to those who benefited from harming the black family by raping, sundering, shattering, and brutalizing its members for crass financial gain.[88]

> Black families can only fix the problems that most hurt them — huge unemployment; racist and opportunistic lending and mortgage practices; diminished family and childcare support for poor mothers; stunted retraining programs for black males who've been made obsolete by technological advance (while penalizing employers who practice discrimination in hiring black males); and the political erosion of early childhood learning programs are critical to success later in life.[89]

The plight of the Black males in particular has had grim consequences on Black life.[90] For black males between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four, homicide was the leading cause of death.[91]

Black theology asserts an eschatology that confronts a world of racism with Black power.[92]

> Our future expectations must be turned into realities. 'Creative discipleship' cannot consist in adaption to, or preservation of, the existing social and judicial

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[85] Kentucky Youth Advocates, "2022 Kentucky Kids Count Data Dashboard," Date by Race/ Ethnicity, https://kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count/data/.

[86] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 107.

[87] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 108.

[88] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 108.

[89] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 109.

[90] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 109.

[91] Dyson, *April 4, 1968,* 110.

[92] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 126.

> orders, still less can it supply religious backgrounds for a given or manufactured situation.' It must consist in analyzing the present structure of things, seeking to overthrow all inhuman and unjustifiable acts of oppression. 'Creative discipleship' of this kind in a love which institutes community, sets things right and puts them in order, becomes eschatologically possible through the Christian hope's prospects of the future of God's kingdom and of man.[93]

Black power and black religion are inseparable. Both seek to free black people from white racism. It is impossible for Black power to be effective without taking into consideration man's religious nature.[94]

Black theology is to make Christianity really Christian by moving Black people with a spirit of Black dignity and self-determination so they can become what the Creator intended. Black theology is a theology of the black community and is thus opposed to any idea which alienates it from that community.[95] It attempts to provide Black people with a sense of nationhood, knowing that until Black unity is attained, Black people will have no weapon against white racism.[96]

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[93] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 126.

[94] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 130.

[95] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 130-131.

[96] Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power,* 131.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

To be in a human world is to live in a world of humans, and in a sense, what more occupies our lives than people?[1] It is not merely that man is a social being but that his nature as human implies a life of feeling and encounters with others.[2] As time goes on, the mounting tragedy over what happens in life means in part what God, fate, and circumstances have brought about, but more it means what happens in the relationships with other people.[3] The lack of our youth, knowing who they are and whose they are in this world, has a profound effect on their cognitive behavior in life.

Every generation of teens is shaped by the social, political, and economic events of the day. Today's teenagers are no different — and they are the first generation whose lives are saturated by mobile technology and social media.[4] In her book, psychologist Jean Twenge uses largescale surveys to draw a detailed portrait of ten qualities that make

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[1] James Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publication, Inc., 1967), 15.

[2] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 15.

[3] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 15.

[4] Diana Divecha, "How Teens Today Are Different from Past Generations," October 20, 2017, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/articles/item/how_teens_today_are_different_from_past_generations.

today's teens unique and the cultural forces shaping them.[5] Twenge finds that new media is making teens more lonely, anxious, and depressed, and is undermining their social skills and even their sleep.[6] She asserts that mental health consequences are especially acute for younger teens. This makes sense developmentally, since the onset of puberty triggers a cascade of changes in the brain that make teens more emotional and more sensitive to their social world.[7]

In this chapter, I focused on the typology of Social Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology. "The science of psychology benefits society and enhances our lives. Psychologists examine the relationships between brain function and behavior, and the environment and behavior, applying what they learn to illuminate our understanding and improve the world around us."[8] Social behavioral and cognitive psychology uses principles of human learning and development as well as cognitive processing in overcoming problem behavior, emotional thinking and thinking. It uses these same principles on helping people live better lives.[9] Social behavioral and cognitive psychology understand applied behavior analysis, behavior therapy, cognitive therapy and cognitive psychology, social learning theories, emotional processing theories, and information theories.[10]

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[5] Diana Divecha, "How Teens Today Are Different from Past Generations."

[6] Divecha, "How Teens Today Are Different from Past Generations."

[7] Divecha, "How Teens Today Are Different from Past Generations."

[8] American Psychological Association, "Science of Psychology," 2013, https://www.apa.org/education-career/guide/science#.

[9] American Psychological Association, "Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology," 2008, https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specilize/behavioral-cognitive#.

[10] American Psychological Association, "Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology," 2008, https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specilize/behavioral-cognitive#.

This interdisciplinary theory will be the central function to examine social behavior and cognitive psychology. “Social behavior is defined as interaction among individuals, normally within the same species, that are usually beneficial to one or more of the individuals.”[11] Cognitive psychology refers to the study of human mental processes and their role in thinking, feeling, and behaving. Perception, memory, acquisition of knowledge and expertise, comprehension and production of language, problem solving, creativity, decision making, and reasoning are some of the broad categories of such study.[12]

The place that analysis and theology have in common is the soul.[13] The one studies God and His intentions, the other studies man his motivation, while the place in between is too often left unoccupied. This vacuum where God and man are traditionally supposed to meet has become the no-man’s land where analysts and clergy confront each other.[14]

Interdisciplinary Theory

Religious development may be defined as the child’s growth within an organized community that has shared narratives, practices, teachings, rituals, and symbols — the

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[11] Encyclopedia.com, “Social Behavior,” Updated May 23, 2018, https://www.encyclopedia.com/earth-and-environment/ecology-and-environmentalism/environmental-studies/social-behavior.

[12] Ronald T. Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology, Second Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc., 2003), 6, Google Books.

[13] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 40.

[14] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 40.

purposes of which are to bring people closer to what they deem to be sacred.[15]

Spirituality has been defined as the search for and relationship with whatever one takes to be a holy or sacred transcendent entity. Thus, spiritual development represents the unfolding of that search process and relationship.[16]

> By the early 2000s, much of the research in cognitive developmental approaches to religious development was specifically focused on the relationship between developing social cognition (e.g., theory of mind) and understanding religious concepts. This shift in focus was largely driven by hypotheses about the fundamental nature of social cognition to the representation of supernatural agents.[17]

Developing a coherent sense of the self is a critical psychosocial task in adolescence and early adulthood. Establishing a coherent self-concept involves identity work — a complex process of negotiating and integrating the various aspects of one's identity into a self-concept that feels "whole."[18] The varieties of divine experience can lead to psychological comparisons, which in turn can lead to theological claims that some images are genuine, and others are distortions.[19]

> Frequently – and this is of no small theoretical interest – the God-image and experience is more distorted or displaced when a person is psychologically more disturbed. Therefore, to the psychologist it appears that the experience of God, as well as the image of God, continues to reveal itself in and through the soul without any limits, beyond the confines of any dogma.[20]

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[15] Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Parks, *Handbook of The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality,* Second Edition (New York, NY: The Gilford Press, 2013), 166, https://www.libguides-thedtl-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/c.php?g=1152904.

[16] Paloutzian and Parks, *Handbook of The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality,* 166.

[17] Paloutzian and Parks, *Handbook of The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality,* 166.

[18] Minas Michiky and Suarez-Orozco, "Who Are You? Exploring Identity Content among Young Adults from Diverse Backgrounds Across Contexts Using a Mixed-Method Approach," Diss., PhD, University of California, 2019, 4, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/94k13379.

[19] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 41.

[20] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 41.

Experience and suffering are terms long associated with soul. "Soul," however, is not a scientific term, and it appears very rarely in psychology today.[21] Exploration of the word shows that we are not dealing with something that can be defined; therefore, "soul" is really not a concept, but a symbol.[22] I would now add one more qualifying attribute to soul: it "makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, is communicated in love — *and has a religious concern.*"[23]

Because the soul is lost – or at least temporarily mislaid of bewildered – ministers have been forced, upon meeting a pastoral problem, to go upstairs to its neighbor, the next closest thing to soul: the mind.[24] But the realm of the mind – perception, memory, mental diseases – is a realm of its own, another flat belonging to another owner who can tell us very little about the person whom the minister really wants to know, the soul.[25] Our concern is not with the mind, its mechanisms and dynamics, its motivations and representations and early memories, but with the human soul and its relation with God.[26]

Social Behavior

Philosophers probe the conceptual coherence of cognitive science theories and formulate general constraints that good theories must satisfy.[27] The information

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[21] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 42.

[22] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 42.

[23] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 42.

[24] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 44.

[25] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 44.

[26] Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion,* 44.

[27] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 7.

processing approach is building on the assumption than an organism's ability to perceive, comprehend, earn, decide, and act depends on mental representations. A mental representation is an unobservable internal code for information.[28] Mental representation, then, provide the basis for all cognitive abilities. To perceive your environment, you must compute mental representations of the objects around you and the events that are taking place. To comprehend and learn from this text, you must mentally represent the information that is conveyed through language.[29]

> In cognitive psychology, the mind is also viewed as a hierarchical system composed of many component functions. For example, the mind can be divided into branches of perception, memory, and motor output. Memory is further divided into a working or short-term system and a long-term system. The long-term system appears to be composed of further subsystems, an issue that we examine. The mind can be best described as a hierarchical arrangement of functional components that can be analyzed and studied in isolation. A core task of cognitive psychology is to determine the number and organization of these functional systems.[30]

If the brain is so complex, then why bother trying to understand its structure and function when the goal is to understand cognition? One answer is that neuroscience provides converging evidence for the theories of cognitive psychology.[31] The mind comes to know the world through sensing and perceiving the environment.[32] It is difficult to grasp that a process as rapid and effortless as perception involves multiple stages and transformations of mental representation. This point can be understood most easily when

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[28] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 8.

[29] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 8.

[30] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology*, 9-10.

[31] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 31.

[32] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 8.

an illusion is perceived, that is, when perceptual processes construct a mental representation that does not accurately mirror the object in the environment.[33]

Are people cruel or kind? Obviously, they can be either, or both. What makes them behave kindly rather than cruelly towards others? What leads them to behave in a manner that benefits other people? How is tendency to behave either way acquired?[34] Positive social (or prosocial) behavior is simply defined as behavior that benefits other people. To behave in such a way a person has to understand another's needs, desires, or goals and act to fulfill them.[35] Although the beneficial consequences of an apparently prosocial act, or of an act that was intended to be prosocial, are often clear, they are sometimes questionable.[36]

> In studies of prosocial behavior, psychologists have tried to circumvent these issues by setting up situations in which a certain action is defined as prosocial. They then study the conditions that determine whether this action will be forthcoming. Usually, the need and the required beneficial act are intended to be unambiguous and are probably (although not certainly) perceived by subjects as acts that would produce benefits. The less clear the benefits, the more judgmental processes enter; such processes are also involved in the assessment of the intention underlying prosocial acts.[37]

Prosocial behavior is also crucial for the functioning of the social group and for the welfare of its individual members.[38] At the most basic level, social groups are based on cooperation, on the willingness of members to work with one another and share the

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[33] Kellogg, *Cognitive Psychology,* 57.

[34] Ervin Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality: Volume 1, Social and Personal Influence* (New York, NY: Academic Press, Inc., 1978), 1, Google Books.

[35] Ibid. Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 2.

[36] Staub, *"Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 2.

[37] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 2.

[38] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 3.

benefits of mutual behavior.[39] On another level, cooperation is involved in the mutual satisfaction of needs in intimate relationships in our everyday lives. By cooperating with others, each person benefits, and thus the behavior of each person can be classified prosocial.[40]

Probably the first psychologists to study "moral" behavior extensively were Hartshorne, May, and Maller (1929), who wrote:

> Without knowledge of actual tendencies and habits, knowledge of motives would be of small use. Furthermore, it is easier to pass from deeds to their causes, than from motives to their possible results. A man may be of great service to his society while solely working for himself. It is equally true that he may be a great nuisance while devoting himself heart and soul to the good of his neighbor. The neighbor may prefer to be alone. Our sole standard by which we rate any behavior is for the moment its utility in the given situation. We assume that the man of socialized motive is the one who seeks to discover what the utility is and then produce it.[41]

Although definitions may vary, the term "altruism" is usually used to refer to behavior resulting in substantial benefits to the recipient, behavior that demands great self-sacrifice from the actor (person) and is intended to benefit only the recipient, not the actor.[42] In contrast to such definitions of positive behavior as either altruistic or not, I regard it most meaningful to recognize that there can be varied motives for positive acts, and specific acts may vary in the degree to which they are altruistically motivated.[43] Comte (1875), in introducing the term altruism, suggested that in order to act in others' behalf, individuals need to overcome self-interest and develop a concern for other's

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[39] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 3.

[40] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 3.

[41] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 6.

[42] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 6.

[43] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 7.

welfare.[44] However, for most psychologists, this is an unreasonable motivational assumption: Psychological theories assume that behavior is influenced by its consequences, both real and anticipated. If behavior that demands various sacrifices is not reinforced in any way, it would extinguish over time.[45] Consequently, rather than experiencing conflict between the interests of the self and others, people may often identify one with the other.[46]

> Morality and human nature have long been of concern to philosophers. A number of psychological conceptions of human nature seem to be related to earlier, philosophical views. The examination of these conceptions highlights both the assumptions of psychologists who do empirical research on the development of moral values and the determinants of moral behavior and their neglect of certain important issues — for example, the matter in which moral values of a social group develop and change.[47]

Morality is a set of rules, customs, or principles that regulate people's conduct in relation to other people, conduct that affects human welfare.[48]

> The most primitive level of morality is *prerational* or *group-enforced morality*, in which moral rules are adhered to because of the fear of negative consequences for deviation and because of the expectation of positive consequences for adherence. The highest of morality has been conceived of as *personal*, *relational*, *reflective*, or *autonomous morality*. The adjectives indicate that the moral standards or values belong to the individual – they are not simply taken over from other – and are the result of rational examination and reflection. The autonomous moral individual may hold beliefs about right and wrong conduct that are different from those of his society.[49]

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[44] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 7.

[45] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 7.

[46] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 7.

[47] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 10.

[48] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 10.

[49] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 10.

What is the source of morality? Human nature, God, and society were most often regarded as the source.[50] The notion that human nature is good can be found repeatedly in the writings of later philosophers and also psychologists. Most of these writings hold that man can be good if certain conditions are fulfilled.[51] Thomas Aquinas believed that it is natural to do good, so when man fails to follow his reason and does not do good, his action is unnatural (and sinful).[52] According to "optimistic" naturalism, if man lives according to natural law, which is good, he will have no evil. The influence of the environment is important.[53]

Evil in man was accounted for by certain human institutions and customs that were contrary to natural law; under such circumstances, undesirable human actions were inevitable.[54] The notion that human nature is good or that man will develop to be good under the right circumstances has also been implied by several contemporary psychologists. Self-actualization, under circumstances that allow and lead man to actualize his own nature, will be both psychologically healthy and good.[55] How a person becomes self-actualized is not a simple matter. The environment must not be too restrictive; the circumstances must be right. Self-examination, self-knowledge, and productivity all seem to be involved in self-actualization.[56]

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[50] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 13.

[51] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

[52] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

[53] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

[54] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

[55] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

[56] Staub, *Positive Social Behavior and Morality,* 14.

Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology is the scientific study of the mind. This means that cognitive psychologists may be interested in anything that involves the mind.[57] The term "cognitive" is often attached to many areas of psychology, and science more widely, to reflect the integration of the philosophy and methods of cognitive psychology within different disciplines.[58] It is important to know that cognitive psychology rely heavily on the scientific method.[59]

> The scientific method requires that ideas and theories are developed on the basis of *evidence* that has been directly observed and can be measured. This involves generating ideas or explanations for things (hypotheses), devising tests for these hypotheses, gathering directly observable and measurable evidence, and then deciding if the evidence supports the hypothesis (whether the hypothesis passed its test). These hypotheses let people develop or make judgements about statements that we know as theories.[60]

Part of the development of cognitive psychology as a complete field (not just one about memory) was due to similar achievements being made roughly the same time by many other researchers and scientists addressing other aspects of cognition, including linguistics and computer scientist.[61] The development of cognitive psychology as an area of study was also helped by the publication of the book *Cognitive Psychology* (Neisser,

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[57] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[58] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[59] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[60] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[61] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

1967), which solidified not only the name but the topic of study, and the importance of information-processing models for it.[62]

> In telling the story of the origins of cognitive psychology, attention is often given to the differences between the types of theories cognitive psychologists wanted to develop and the types of theories that other psychologists, particularly behaviorists, wanted to develop. **Behaviorism**, in very simple terms, is the idea that psychology can be studied by looking at relationships between behaviors without needing to theorize about things such as a mind. [63]

Where behaviorist avoid theories about the internal structure of our minds, cognitive psychologists rely upon them when presenting their ideas and theories.[64]

Education and cognitive psychology have tended to pursue parallel rather than overlapping paths. Yet there is, or should be, considerable common ground, since both have major interest in learning memory.[65] When teaching, new information must be embedded meaningfully in relevant, previously existing knowledge to ensure that it will be retrievable when necessary.[66] A wide variety of variables affect the capacity to store and retrieve information from memory, including meaning, the context and manner in

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[62] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[63] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[64] Mathew Coxon and Dominic Upton, *Cognitive Psychology: Critical Thinking in Psychology Series* (London, UK: SAGE Publication, Inc., 2012,) https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526435972.

[65] Glenn Regehr and Geoffrey Norman, "Issues in Cognitive Psychology: Implications for Professional Education," *Academic Medicine* 71, no.9, (September 1996) 998, https://journals.lww.com/acad emicmedicine/Abstract/1996/09000/Issues_in_cognitive_psychology_ implications_for.15.aspx.

[66] Glenn Regehr and Geoffrey Norman, "Issues in Cognitive Psychology: Implications for Professional Education," *Academic Medicine* 71, no.9, (September 1996) 998, https://journals.lww.com/acad emicmedicine/Abstract/1996/09000/Issues_in_cognitive_psychology_implications_for.15.aspx.

which information is learned, and relevant practice in retrieval.[67] Much of the development of expertise involves the transition from using general problem-solving routines to using the need for classic "problem solving."[68]

The internal constructs of cognitive psychology tend to be of a very specific type. Almost always, they concern information processing, describing how the brain processes information.[69] Cognitive constructs – "as I will call internal constructs in cognitive psychology – typically do *not* represent conscious mental states. Instead, they typically represent unconscious information experience. Most cognitive psychologists do not try to explain conscious experience."[70] Rather than addressing conscious experience, cognitive psychology primarily addresses how the brain processes information.[71] Ultimately, cognitive psychology will have to explain consciousness if it is to succeed, but present theories focus primarily on how the brain processes information to perform the fundamental tasks of intelligence.[72]

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[67] Glenn Regehr and Geoffrey Norman, "Issues in Cognitive Psychology: Implications for Professional Education," *Academic Medicine* 71, no.9, (September 1996) 998, https://journals.lww.com/acad emicmedicine/Abstract/1996/09000/Issues_in_cognitive_psychology_implications_for.15.aspx.

[68] Glenn Regehr and Geoffrey Norman, "Issues in Cognitive Psychology: Implications for Professional Education," *Academic Medicine* 71, no.9, (September 1996) 998, https://journals.lww.com/acad emicmedicine/Abstract/1996/09000/Issues_in_cognitive_psychology_implications_for.15.aspx.

[69] Lawrence W. Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology: An Overview for Cognitive Scientist* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 1992), 9, https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3kbrAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=cognitive+psychology+and+behavior&ots=jftuu85y-z&sig=D7Fd_CCjjgSe200xcrsDVNAqQ#v=onepage&q&f=true.

[70] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology*, 9.

[71] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology,* 9.

[72] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology,* 10.

People often take for granted cognitive abilities that seem simple but are actually amazingly sophisticated. The ability to categorize is one example.[73] Categorization provides the gateway between perception and cognition. After a perceptual system acquires information about an entity in the environment, the cognitive system places the entity into a category.[74] These categories are representations, because they are structures in the cognitive system that stand for perceived entities in the environment.[75]

> Obviously, our perception of the world is not limited to visual input. Many other types of input, such as sounds and odors, provide useful information. This relates to what is known as 'sensory modalities.' A **sensory modality** is a dedicated subset of the nervous system that responds to specific physical inputs.[76]

"Sensory systems inform us not only about many aspects of the world around us (**exteroception**), but also about what happens inside our body (**proprioception**). There are important limits to what the senses can detect."[77] These boundaries, in turn, force the perceptual system to make some assumptions about how events are connected in order to build a representation of the outside world.[78]

> Sensory systems receive information from their dedicated sets of receptors. The role of the receptors is to bring into the system the basic elements of perception that combine to form a **percept** (i.e., the mental representation of what is perceived). These basic elements are referred to as **sensations**, while more elaborated materials are referred to as **perceptions**. Neither sensations nor perceptions can exist on their own. Both processes are entangled, and it is sometimes difficult to determine where sensations end, and perceptions begin. It

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[73] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology,* 15.

[74] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology,* 15.

[75] Barsalou, *Cognitive Psychology,* 15-16.

[76] Fernand Gobet, Philippe Chassy, and Merim Bilali´c, *Foundations of Cognitive Psychology* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2011), 49, https://books.google.com/ books?hl=en&lr= &id=NMsvEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=fundementals+cognitive+psychology&ots=DvAOUfE_bP &sig=3TGIL20o5XSFzpzHba0vlfjeQ#=onepage&q&f=true.

[77] Gobet, Chassy, and Bilali´c, *Foundations of Cognitive Psychology,* 49.

[78] Gobet, Chassy, and Bilali´c, *Foundations of Cognitive Psychology,* 49.

is important to realize that multiple specialized sensory systems participate in constructing an internal representation of reality.[79]

Behavior and Cognitive Psychology in Adolescents

It is well established that adolescents are more likely than children or adults to take risks, as evinced by elevated rates of experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, unprotected sexual activity, violence and nonviolent crime, and reckless driving.[80] A litany of carefully controlled laboratory experiments contrasted adolescents possess the knowledge, values, and processing efficiency to evaluate risky decisions as competently as adults.[81] Consistently with self-reports of lower resistance to peer influence among adolescents than among adults, observational data point to peer influence as a primary contextual factor contributing to adolescents' heightened tendency to make risky decisions.[82] Furthermore, one of the strongest predicators of delinquent behavior in adolescence is affiliation with delinquent peers, an association that has been attributed to varying degrees to peer socialization and friendship choices, in which risk-taking adolescents naturally gravitate toward one another.[83]

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[79] Gobet, Chassy, and Bilali´c, *Foundations of Cognitive Psychology,* 49.

[80] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[81] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[82] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[83] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

First, decisions are a product of both cognitive and affective input, even when affect is unrelated to the choices under evaluation.[84] For instance, the anticipated emotional outcome of a behavioral option – how one expects to feel after making a given choice – contributes to one's cognitive assessment of its expected value.[85] Second, relative to adults, adolescents exhibit stronger "bottom-up" affective reactivity in response to socially relevant stimuli. Some controversy remains regarding the degree to which adolescents are more or less sensitive than children and adults to nonsocial cues. Few scholars now dispute that adolescence is a period of peak neurobehavioral sensitivity to social stimuli.[86]

Third, adolescents are less capable of "top-down" cognitive control of impulsive behavior. In contrast to social processing, which undergoes relatively sudden changes around the time of puberty, cognitive capacities supporting efficient self-regulation mature in a gradual, linear pattern over the course of adolescence.[87] Indeed, evidence is

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[84] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[85] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[86] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 114, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[87] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 116, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

growing for a direct link between structural and functional brain maturation during adolescence and current improvements in cognitive control.[88]

> Moreover, research on age differences in control-related network dynamics has demonstrated adolescent immaturity in the functional integration of neural signals deriving from specialized cortical and subcortical 'hub' regions. This immaturity capacity for functional integration may contribute to adolescents' difficulties with simultaneously evaluating social, affective, and cognitive factors relevant to given decisions, particularly when social and emotional considerations are disproportionately salient.[89]

Conclusion

In the case of cognition, there are three structural features that subtend, constrain, or direct the performance of mental processes and behavior: knowledge, processing capacity, and affective orientations. When people have more knowledge and more processing capacity, they can perform a wider array of mental tasks and carry out these tasks more accurately and efficiently. Affective orientations such as interest and values are primarily involved in determining the choices people make and the level of attention and effort allocated to specific kinds of information and task.[90]

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[88] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 116, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[89] Dustin Albert, Jason Chein, and Laurence, Steinberg, "The Teenage Brain: Peer Influences on Adolescent Decision Making," Association for Psychology Science, 2013, 116, https://journals.sagepub.com/d oi/pdf/10.11177/0963721412471347.

[90] James P. Byrnes and Matthew L. Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation: Children and Teens in the 21st Century*, ed. Jamshid Beheshti and Andrew Large (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2013) 24, https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=eO2a7ghC4GYC&oi= fnd&pg=behavioral+ and+cognitive+psychology+in+teenagers&ots=wxAnfl6Knf&sig=lzmKk4ha9raXsv0nwmfOqOntbPc#v=onepage&q&f=true.

A number of studies have revealed that knowledge is not stored in the human mind as a large mass of isolated ideas. Rather, knowledge is organized along specific distinctions, kinds, or categories.[91] The claim that cognition is domain-specific is supported by many traditional studies in the field of psychology, and also by studies conducted by neuroscientists and evolutionary psychologists in the sense that cognitive skills within domains clusters in specific regions of the brain.[92]

Different levels of knowledge would also lead to the prediction that more knowledgeable individuals would be more equipped to make sense of any information that they discovered in their search.[93]

> It is not immediately clear whether age difference in knowledge would lead to the prediction that older searchers would be more likely to use information once it was retrieved. It would seem the key variable that predicts a higher likelihood of use is whether the searcher considers the information to have met their goals. It is possible that information that is poorly comprehended could be misused.[94]

In addition to knowledge, a second structural aspect of the mind that can facilitate or impede knowledge acquisition and use is the processing capacity of "working memory." Psychologists divided the human memory system into two components: permanent memory and working memory.[95] Working memory refers to "a limited capacity system responsible for the simultaneous storage and manipulation of information during the performance of cognitive tasks."[96] Working memory is considered a transient

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[91] Byrnes and Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 24.

[92] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 24.

[93] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 29.

[94] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 24.

[95] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 31.

[96] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 31.

form of memory because information will fade from it within a few seconds if it is not maintained through rehearsal or transferred to permanent memory.[97]

We must grab our children and youth early in life and instruct them on who they are and whose they are in this world as it related to God. We do our African American youth of Lexington, Kentucky, a grave disservice if we do not try to supply them with the necessary tools to succeed in life. Programs that focus on their behavior and cognitive skills are imperative for them to make right decisions and choices as they navigate through their lives. If we do not stand up and help, then who will? If we do not take action now, then when is the right time?

[97] Byrnes Bernacki, *The Information Behavior of a New Generation,* 31.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

This doctoral project originated from the synergy of the contextual analysis which showed a need to reach our Black children ages twelve through eighteen from being incarcerated. There are quite a few mentorship programs in Lexington, Kentucky, but there are still so many of our youth entering into the juvenile system and into the adult system. The problem statement piqued my interest and curiosity to all the mentorship programs and how many mentors are actually trained for the work. This leads me to a ministry approach that trains the mentor. Mentorship is one thing that you can get into and be a part of without any type of training or calling. I believe it was these factor alone that led me to design this project model for those individuals who feel a call to mentor and to train the mentors for the work.

This chapter synthesizes all the foundation work completed prior to the project research as well as the project itself. It seeks to make clear the connection points from the start to finish then conclude with a summary of learning. Each of the foundational chapters brings a particular aspect of the research project while reinforcing the problem statement and hypothesis. A part of my spiritual autobiography found in the Ministry Focus chapter shows how a young man's life can go off track and stay off track for a long time without the proper guidance from trained mentors. We must re-examine how easy it is for individuals to become mentors to our Black youth. The thesis also shows the

importance of having someone to talk to about difficult situations in life and or with family issues.

The Biblical Foundations chapter examines the selected text of Exodus 3:1-15. This account tells us of Moses' story through the actions of God. It is Moses' identity document showing where he comes from and his place in the world. This ties to the youth of today and a search for their own identity. Helping youth to understand who they are first is key. Walking with youth through their own lens of identity and seeing where they are with the notion of God is imperative to their growth. Youth tend to create identity by the social groups they hang with coming up in life. Most time, not all, the person they think they are is truly not who God is calling them to become.

The Historical Foundations chapter researches the history of Marcus Garvey, Pan-Americanism, the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and the African League, and the Juvenile Division. Understanding the different lenses of our culture gives people an understanding of the fight that we have as a people and what we have gone through and the strides that our forefathers made. This chapter also promoted black economic uplift via self-reliance, political equality via self-determination, and liberation for black people as a whole. The blueprint was laid for our youth to follow, a blueprint that gave a vision for a new world, a world where all people of African origin, on every continent can be unified, self-sufficient, and proud.

Finally, the Interdisciplinary Foundations chapter focuses on social behavioral and cognitive psychology. These interdisciplinary units bridge the gap between social and cognitive transformation in Lexington, Kentucky. The concept of understanding Social Behavior and Cognitive Psychology is critical in understanding our youth of today. How

they think, how they view God, themselves and others in a society that is already racially divided and where the system is systematically stacked against them is imperative on our end. Social behavior and cognitive psychology allow us to study the human mental process and their role in thinking.

From this wealth of work, it became obvious that the Black youth in Lexington, Kentucky, need trained Black male mentors in spiritual and culturally based mentorship programs. It is imperative that the mentors are properly trained to deal with our youth as they face the world and its difficult issues. Our youth will make better cognitive decisions about the choices they make and have a better understanding of who they are and whose they are.

Overall, this is a project that deals with the myth that our Black youth do not know who they are and are destined for the penitentiary. This is an invitation to Black males who feel they are called to work with the so called "at-risk" youth. It is my prayer that this project has provided appropriate details of the methodology used, implementation style, a summary of learning, suggestions for the future, and concluding thoughts about future insights.

Methodology

The methodology used for this project is qualitative. Just as Abraham was called by God to go back and ask Pharaoh to let God's people go, mentorship is a calling, a ministry, and that mentor needs to be adequately trained for the job. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray."[1] In order for mentors

[1] Proverbs 22:6, NRSV.

to train up a child, they have to be trained as well. As mentors are trained, they learn the necessary tools to be able to walk along side of the youth and help them navigate life's pitfalls and also deal with personal issues along the way. This model also builds strong relationships that allows the youth to know that there are other people in the world who want to see them succeed and are willing to assist in any way possible.

Research Model and Participants

The research model includes African American men who feel the call on their life to mentoring. These are men who perceive God is calling them to work with our Black youth and have a heart for them. Therefore, I used a couple of methods of recruiting participants. I solicited individuals through direct phone calls and posting a flyer (see Appendix A) to all my social media sites: Facebook, Within My Father's House, Inc. Facebook page, LinkedIn, Within My Father's House, Inc. Twitter page, as well as Instagram. The flyer stated, "All Things Are Possible, Within My Father's House, Inc.," and included an event flyer which also included my name and phone number to contact me. Once all the individuals contacted me, I set a time and place and gave them the specifics on when the project would start, the dates, time, and place. From my recruitment efforts, there were ten African American men who showed interest in the project. I still had five individuals who contacted me after I had all my participants who were wanting to participate in the project. All stated that if and when I conducted the project again, they would like to participate. When the research project started two individuals could not participate due to work schedules and life issues. Therefore, I began research project with eight participants on February 13, 2024, and completed it on April

2, 2024. By the end of the eight week project, two other participants were excused from the project due to missing to many of the scheduled session because of personal issues. There were six men who completed the research project for training the mentor.

In the design of the study, I initially planned to meet in three different schools in Fayette County for the sessions and do groups. However, in discussions with my mentor and professional associates, it was brought to light a very important biblical truth solution. In listening to sound advice, I considered their suggestion; instead of going into the three schools and conducting three different group, one site was chosen to train these men who feel the call to work with youth and train them for the work. Just as Moses' father-in-law Jethro suggested in[2] Exodus 18:17-23,

> [17]Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'What you are doing is not good.[18]You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. [19]Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; [20]teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. [21]You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.[22] Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So, it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.[23]If you do this, and God so command you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.'

All of the session were at Broadway Christian Church instead of in the school system. The design included four areas of gathering data; they were the interview questions (Appendix F), pre- and post-survey questionnaires (Appendix C and D), questionnaire (Appendix E), and reflection journaling. Each method would assist me as the researcher to arrive at answers relevant to the problem statement which states, if

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[2] Exodus 18:17-23, NRSV.

African American adults participated in spiritual and culturally based mentorship training programs, then there would be mentors available to guide and train youth, proving the hypothesis.

Instruments Used for the Research Study

I wanted to engage a variety of measures to help foster insight that would help in this training.

1. Interview questions allowed the participants to speak of their calling to mentorship, their significant life changes, how to resolve conflict, and hobbies.
2. Pre-Survey Questionnaire helped establish a guideline of their attitudes, a general observation of their commitment to the work, their beliefs, and working with others who feel the call to mentorship as well.
3. Post-Survey Questionnaire assisted in confirmation whether if there were any changes in the participants thought process, or ideas, and if they felt empowered for the work ahead of them.
4. Questionnaire contributes to the attitude of who the participants feel could or should be able to work with these youth, what youth should be allowed into the program, and the comfort level they have themselves to work with the youth.
5. Journaling and Focus Group discussion allowed for peer group discussions and dialogue about the lesson taught and life issues that the participants would face while conducting their own youth groups or one-on-one sessions with youth and facing their own issues they need to heal from. This allowed for open and honest dialogue

amongst men from different age ranges and backgrounds in a safe place with no judgement to speak on their own life experiences.

Anticipated Impact on Participants

Taking into consideration the research design and the participants that were involved, there were a few insights that I hoped the project would shed some light on. First, I hoped that this type of study would open and foster dialogue between the participants about past trauma that they experienced and healing process they went through or still need to go through. Second, I wanted the participants to understand that there are some issues these youth are dealing with and will deal with that they will have to seek professional help for the youth. Third, we cannot deal with the youth in the same mind state of how we were raised. Mentorship is one of the only volunteer actions you can become a part of without any type of training. We have to look at mentorship as ministry and foster that mindset. Fourth, through the journaling and open discussions, I was looking for the participants to take a hard look at themselves — to be able to become relatable to the youth. We have to be able to share ourselves to youth as to the mistakes that we made and the changes. The youth are not looking for perfect people to be in their lives, they are searching for people who are going to be consistently there for them and not leave them when their life is turbulent.

Implementation

This section of the project analysis is the implementation of the project that I used for the research project. This shows the steps taken before the research study started. It

provides an overview of the weekly instructional classes and what measure was used to gather data for the hypothesis. This concluded with how data was collected from the participants according to the regulations of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of United Theological Seminary.

Initial Steps

Before the project even started on February 13, 2024, there were a few steps that had to be completed. I began the process of recruitment after I passed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process in December. I had conversations with each individual about the project, emphasizing this is a doctoral research project for African American men who are interested in mentorship training who wanted to make a difference in the lives of youth and community. Afterward, I explained the time frame for the eight-week sessions and how many sessions they were allowed to miss. Once we all met at our initial session, I provided the participants with a consent form (see Appendix B). This was a great opportunity for the participants to meet and discuss any apprehensions they may have and thank them for participating. Plus, participants were given seven interview questions to answer (see Appendix F). On the start date of the study, all but two showed up, but that was for personal reason out of their control. The two who could not participate asked if the study was done again, if they could participate then.

The Participants

The participants were made up of diverse ages, backgrounds, and occupations. What truly made the group special was two of my professional associates participated in

the study itself. There were two minister, one of whom was a pastor (my professional associate), three of whom worked in corrections, a barber, a professor (my professional associate), and a factory worker/artist. All participants are high school graduates except one who received his GED; two had a PhD; and a couple of them had some college credits. All of the participants are respected and active in the community. Unfortunately, due to personal issues out of their control and missing more than the allotted absences, two of the remaining participants did not finish the research project.

Professional and Contextual Associates

The professional and contextual associates assisted in various ways and degrees. I met with each professional associate separately as to the degree as I needed their assistance from grammar and style to spiritual and biblical text guidance, history research, and the formation of the project model. I met with the contextual associates as to the degree I would use their expertise in clarity of the research, punctuation, and voice. All were excited about the project and honored that I thought of them to assist in this capacity. Two of them provided feedback to the style of the research project, from being in three schools and working with three different groups of youth by myself, to training the mentors for the work. All offered great feedback as to the clarity of the research and the flow of the document itself. What made them even more special was they spoke highly of the research to other individuals in the community. Their excitement of the research project helped open up conversations about the state of our youth and how we deal with our youth.

As stated earlier, two of my professional associates were actual participants in the research project and taught a session a piece. They provided expert insight in their respected fields and brought even more enthusiasm into our session. Both professional associates reiterated the need for this training in the future.

Weekly Session Overview

Week 1: February 13th

This week included our formal welcome to all participants and an overview of Equipping Mentors to Improve Student Cognitive Behavior through Spiritual and Cultural Identity project, in which I reiterated the dates and times of the sessions, attendance, and confidentiality. The first day included a fifteen minute refreshment and introduction, along with thirty minutes of description of the project and how to use their journals with a forty-five minute focus group discussion. Interview question, pre- survey questionnaires, questionnaires, and consent forms were all turned in. This focus group discussed the call to mentorship, and how if called, it is hard to just walk away when situations become rough.

This session gave the participants the ability to exchange numbers and get to know why they were interested in participating in this project. It opened up dialogue between participants about different things each where doing in the community and who all knew each other. I was able to discuss my background and where the project thought came from in my own personal ministry and the need for it. The session ended with prayer. All sessions were held at Broadway Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, in

a room upstairs from the sanctuary assigned to Within My Father's House, Inc. Non-profit organization.

Week 2: February 20th

The session started with a brief overview from the previous week and then moved into the lesson of the day which focused on, "Conflict Resolution and Ways to Calm Down" (Anger Cues and Anger Triggers). [3] The participants were instructed to self-evaluate as we dealt with each weekly theme. It is hard to deal with youth if we have not dealt with our own issues and learned ourselves. I explained three ways of handling conflict: passive (you win/I lose), aggressive (I win/you lose) and assertive (I win/you win) and how have they utilized those methods. I explained all styles may be appropriate at times and at other times they might not work, and that it is always good to learn new styles to use and learn when to use them when less effective methods do not work. As we were coming up on our break time, I asked if they wanted to take a break and unanimously everyone decided to keep going. I discussed the importance of knowing your own personal anger cues and triggers and the difference between the two. Anger cues alert you to the fact of whatever is being said or happening is about to upset you, while anger triggers send you off as soon as something is said or happens. In working with youth, they will purposely push your buttons to see what will upset you or set you off completely. Lastly, ways of calming yourself down were addressed. Maybe you need to count to ten, focus on an object, or even remove yourself by taking a walk, and there

[3] Peacefull Alternatives to Tough Situations: PATTS, "The PSATTS Philosophy," last modified March 2008, https://www.patts.info/.

are more ways, but it is important that mentors learn themselves first and deal with their own issues before working with youth. For homework, the participants were asked to write in their journals on how the session was.

Week 3; February 27th

The focus of the week was "Expressing Emotion and Seeking Support" (Who is Your Circle).[4] I started off with two questions: "What is emotion?" and "How do you handle your emotions?" Emotion, is defined as a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear), that is subjectively experienced as a strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied physiological and behavioral changes in the body.[5] I explained how many people do not directly express how they are really feeling and that can result in people misunderstanding them. I discussed what different expressions look like — anger, sadness, joy, happiness, and eagerness. I had the participants look at themselves because we are trying to train a young man how to express emotion and sometimes we do not even know how to express our own emotions. I expressed to the participants that we have to look inside of us and learn ourselves before we can truly assist our youth. We have to be open and honest with ourselves. Next, we discussed seeking support. For a youth to understand their support, you have to build relationships to build a support circle. The prior week was a great example of a youth who knew who his circle was. We had a youth reach out to a participant and he came to our session. He was in a bad situation but realized who he needed to call to get the help,

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[4] Peacefull Alternatives to Tough Situations: PATTS, "The PSATTS Philosophy," last modified March 2008, https://www.patts.info/.

[5] *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s. v. "emotion," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.

(which was WMFHP6), but the crazy part about it was the youth was getting help but did not want to talk to the police. So, he was getting help, but did not quite want the help at first because of the police. We have to recognize our own biases as Black males dealing with the police and helping our youth. We have to help them see the people who are around, who are there to help and want to see them succeed. We ended the session by reiterating that we have to allow the youth to tell you who they feel their circle is.

Week 4: March 5th

This week the focus was "Understanding Who You Are Spiritually," (Who Are You). This session was taught by one of my professional associates, Rev. Dr. Marland Fain, senior pastor of Cedar Top Baptist Church in Wilmore, Kentucky. Dr. Fain used the text, Exodus 3:1-15, which is the Biblical Foundations of this project. Dr. Fain opened with a question for the group: "What is spiritual or spirituality?" He also opened with a quote from Spencer, RC of Psychiatrists: "Spirituality involves the recognition, feelings, sense, or belief that there is something greater than myself. A life with significance beyond a mundane everyday existence . . . ."[6] A second question he asked is: "Why is spiritual growth important?" Dr. Fain pointed out that our vertical relationship will dictate our horizontal relationships, and that a position of leadership alone will not cure shortcomings, it will expose them. There were so many points that Dr. Fain discussed with the group during the session. He asserted that if we are going to be effective leaders and mentors, then we must have wrestled with issues in our ow life. Also, mentors must

[6] Marland Fain, the senior pastor at Cedar Top Baptist Church in Wilmore, Kentucky, made this reference without providing an actual citation. He referred to it as: Spencer, RC of Psychiatrists.

take an intentional approach to grow. He pointed out that Moses spent years away from Egypt in the desert as a shepherd; the participants have to be patient and get sound accountability partners. Next, he discussed how mentors must have a rooted identity if we are going to help others. He moved along to how Moses had developed a healthy fear of holy things and of God and understood who granted the authority. We as mentors have to understand our authority is rooted in who (or what) we worship. Dr. Fain went on to talk about credibility and how we must establish credibility within ourselves to think bigger and better. We then establish credibility with those entrusted to our care, and there is divine approach in who we seek out. Lastly, he talked about the framework of spirituality and recognizing who we are, and that we have to keep in mind that it is not about us, but those who we are entrusted to serve. Dr. Fain left the session with a poem to contemplate by Marianne Williamson, "Our Deepest Fear."[7]

Week 5: March 12th

The session this week was "Responsibility and Self Control," (Soothing and Stinking Thinking).[8] This topic addressed the importance of social behavior and cognitive psychology. This comes from the Interdisciplinary Foundations chapter. I explained that Social Behavior and Cognitive Psychology use principles of human learning and development as well as cognitive processing in overcoming problem behavior, emotional thinking, and thinking. Social behavior is defined as interaction among individuals, normally within the same species, that are usually beneficial to one or more of the

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[7] Marianne Williamson, "Our Deepest Fear,"

[8] Peacefull Alternatives to Tough Situations: PATTS, "The PSATTS Philosophy," last modified March 2008, https://www.patts.info/.

individuals.[9] Cognitive psychology refers to the study of human mental processes and their role in thinking, feeling, and behavior.[10] I asked the participants if they have ever noticed that when something happens, it may really upset one person and someone else does not get upset at all. This is because our reactions to events are different because of what we say to ourselves about the event. I gave the group an exercise to do. I told them to say out loud, "I am going to go to work and do my job and not let anything get to me." Next, I had them say the same thing again, but this time put their fingers in their ears and say the statement. I posed a question to them to see which sounded louder. The majority said, "when they had their fingers in their ears." They asked why was this so? I stated to them the reason it sounded louder is because, what you say something to yourself, should always be louder than what the world says to you.

As I discussed soothing and stinking thinking, I explained we call our self-talk soothing thinking because it helps us calm down and handle a situation rationally. Or stinking thinking because it gets us upset and more likely to handle a conflict aggressively. People talk to themselves in their head all the time, and we have control over whether that self-talk is positive or negative. Successful people learn to stop and think before they act. Our thoughts can be controlled if we learn to listen to them in a soothing thinking manner.

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[9] American Psychological Association, "Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology," 2008, https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/behavioral-congitive#.

[10] American Psychological Association, "Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology," 2008, https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/behavioral-congitive#.

Week 6: March 19th

This session dealt with "Repercussion of Impulsive Behavior," (Violence and Your Future). [11] I explained that an impulsive behavior is when you act quickly with no thought to the consequences. There is nothing on your mind beyond that exact moment. We all engage in impulsive behavior from time to time, especially when we are young. It is well established that adolescents are more likely than children or adults to take risks as evidence by elevated rates of experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, drugs, unprotected sexual activity, violent and nonviolent crimes, and reckless driving. Developing a coherent sense of their self is a critical psycho-social task in adolescence and early adulthood. I posed four questions this week to discuss in our group.

1. What are the consequences of our actions?
2. Do you know the law for children?
3. What happens if the youth get into a fight in your groups?
4. How do you deal with impulsive thinking and behavior?

These questions took the participants by surprise because of the answers to the questions. I explained that the hardest thing for a mentor to do is dismiss a mentee from a group they will conduct because of their actions in the group. I had to reiterate that the youth will try their authority, and they needed to be able to stay cool headed in the situation. This is why mentors have to know themselves and what biases they pose.

I discussed that youth and children will not be arrested if they fight in your groups or program. If the police are called, the police will call the parents or guardians of the

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[11] Peacefull Alternatives to Tough Situations: PATTS, "The PSATTS Philosophy," last modified March 2008, https://www.patts.info/.

children or youth to have them pick them up. Lastly, we discussed how we have to know the law ourselves and be intentional and upfront about what happens when the law is broken.

Week 7: March 26th

This week's session focus was, "Understanding Our History," (Black Life in America). This session was conducted by another professional associate of mine, Dr. Don Offutt, who is an Adjunct History Professor at Kentucky State University. Dr. Offutt opened with the importance of paying tribute to those who came before us, our ancestors. He gave respect to God the Most High and those ancestors whose shoulders we stand upon. Dr. Offutt pointed out that it is a must for us as participants to know our own history. (How can we expect the younger generation to know what we do not know). He discussed the importance Mother Africa and the beginning of civilization, languages, mathematics, science, astrology, and medicines. Dr. Offutt pointed to making sure that slavery was not the beginning of our history, but a pause per say in history. Dr. Offutt stated that we need to make history fun and exciting for our youth so they will be excited to learn it and understand from a cultural standpoint of who they are. Dr. Offutt pointed out that we have to bridge the gap with the youth and their Black history. Dr. Offutt, discussed Marcus Garvey and the Pan-African Movement. Dr. Offutt's session ran over and he apologized for it, but there were no complaints from the participants in the group. I altered our last session to allow Dr. Offutt to finish up his session and discussion.

Week 8: April 2nd

In the final session of the project, after Dr. Offutt finished up the last of Understanding Our History, we did not go and observe at the Black Male Working (BMW) Academy. We had a discussion about our eight weeks together and their thoughts of what they had been learning. The participants all enjoyed the camaraderie they experienced while in the project. They expressed, if it is done again that they would even participate and are excited to possibly start their own mentorship groups or join Within My Father's House 859 Group as mentors. I told the participants if they are interested in being a part of the 859 Group, that I am already in three different Fayette County schools with five groups that I have worked with in the past with youth ages fourteen to eighteen. At the end of the session, I asked the participants to turn in their journals and complete the post-survey questionnaire.

Summary of Learnings

In this section there will be different types of data presented from different data instruments that were used during this project. Each of these data instruments helped me prove my hypothesis. The date instruments were pre- and post-survey qustionnaires, journal entries, and questionnaire.

Pre- and Post-Survey

These are some of the pre- and post-questions and comments addressed:

1) Men who work with this program must commit for one school year.

2) Men who work with these youth should be willing to receive additional training: i.e., mental health first aider, first aid, and CPR?
3) Men who work with this program must be willing to do some light physical activities.

Results from the Pre-Survey Questionnaire showed the following:

Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree
1.			3	2	1
2.			2	2	2
3.		1	2	1	2
4.			1	2	3
5.		1	1	1	3
6.				5	1
7.		1	3	1	1
8.	1	2		2	1
9.	1			4	1
10.	1	1	1	3	

Results from the Post-Survey Questionnaire showed the following:

Question #	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree
1.		1		4	1

2.				6	
3.			1	3	2
4.				4	2
5.	1			3	2
6.	1			5	
7.			1	3	2
8.	1			3	2
9.	1			5	
10.				5	1

Post Survey Questions

The results of the post survey questions showed changes in all of the participants. There was one participant who showed a change in answers due to wording. He stated, the words “must” and “should” had a strong connotation in tone. There was another participant who had a decline on one of his answers, but the rest increased. All the other participants answers changed for the better. The participants had good things to say about the project and were excited about implementing the information they learned to their mentees.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire contributed to the data collection of the participants’ beliefs of what spirit filled is and their attitudes towards the mentees as well as their attitudes towards other entities working with this same demographic of youth and who they are

willing to work with. It also helps with gaining insight to what other possible areas of training they feel the youth could benefit from. This contributed to the openness on the part of the participants (see Appendix F)

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP1	a	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	c

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP2	-----	abcd	d	abc	ab	d	abcd	c	-----	abcd

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP3	b	abcd	d	abcd	a	d	abcd	abcd	d	d

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP4	c	abcd	c	bc	a	d	d	c	c	c

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP5	b	b	b	d	a	d	d	c	d	d

Participant	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
WMFHP6	c	d	d	c	b	c	d	c	c	a

Reflection Journals

These are raw journal entries of what the participant took away from each session presented — be it good or bad. Some participants missed a couple of sessions and are marked absent. The entrees are in no specific order as to coincide with the charts in this chapter. All journals will be kept for three years in a locked box and then destroyed. (Very little editing is done in these comments to capture the participants' actual voice).

Week 2: Reflection Journal: Conflict Resolution and Ways to Calm Down (Anger Cues and Anger Triggers)

WMFHP1 – "In this chapter I concluded that you must have a rapport with the young people. Hopefully, they will come to you when they have a problem so you will have a chance to talk through their anger. Most importantly, the class concluded you have to practice good conflict resolution skills yourself. Because they will imitate what you portray or use your anger to behave seemingly. I asked an elder in the course what should we do? He responded, 'Be the change, you want to see.'"

WMFHP2 – "Describing styles of communication can be good, but usually is not good enough. This case where the latter is true. I wanted to see more role-plays, videos and/or clinical vignettes comparing the different styles of communication with this population. If they have their own language and styles of communication (signs and symbols), I want as much knowledge as possible to avoid unintentionally offending someone I am trying to mentor. Also, I wanted to hear more about relationship building particularly where when I come from, 'A different side of the track' than the targeted population of this study."

WMFHP3 – “The participants reflected on what makes them angry. Some recalled moments as recent as earlier that day. That particular day some of the anger triggered dealt with family, some dealt with business transactions. I think the exercise helped the men do an introspective look at themselves.”

WMFHP4 – “The presentation was eye-opening and the presenter sound [good]. I left with the thought that this type of training is needed in our communities; not just those is this study. Relationships with our youth (and anybody) is crucial - we have to be more intentional about breaking down barriers. This can only happen if we understand and seek to resolve those traumas in our lives that cause conflict. If we are honest, most leaders have not learned to deal with and control emotions. As stated to the presenter, this type of group-learning and building will be sought out on a national level. In sports they say, ‘defense travels,’ — This mentorship training ‘will travel.’”

WMFHP5 – “This discussion was beneficial. Learning how to use ways to calm down, understanding oneself when confronting situations. There are many obstacle approaches, but the best way is no way, everybody has different approaches. The one thing that is to be clear is the youth need help and guidance. Not only do they need support, but trust is also the major factor. Melting the iceberg and getting to the main root of their issues help the youth understand their value and culture as black intelligent men.”

WMFHP6 – “Being with men of renown, ‘A circle of support’ for myself, it addresses and acknowledges issues in myself. It gives me a yearning I feel to carry the mantel of leadership outside of the four walls of my home and church.”

Week 3: Reflection Journal: Expressing Emotion and Seeking Support (Who is Your Circle)

WMFHP1 – "In response to expressing emotion, I think, I do so through my art. Whether music, film, or writing. How do I seek support? I have a friend I talk to on a regular basis, daily, or sometimes several times a week. Other than that, I know what prayer is. I know what worship does. I know what and who God is. I believe He is alive. I have seen enough in my time to know that fact. The key is to maintain a personal relationship myself and to encourage young people to take advantage of the relationship. I believe I have to be wise in doing so. You just cannot come on out and present it but you have to be invited in to present it in a fashion that it is received."

WMFHP2 – "I walked away from the session feeling frustrated. I gain more 'Head Knowledge' but left unsure of how to move from what I know to how to do it. This session was as helpful to me as it was discouraging to me. What I needed was practical guidance and suggestions on how to move from theory to praxis with particular emphasis on methods of conflict resolution that Damon has learned over the years with the target population."

WMFHP3 – "The positive thing is the willingness of the men to share thoughts feelings and dialogue. These men show their willingness to work through this project. Trust is beginning to happen with the men in this focus group."

WMFHP4 - Absent

WMFHP5 – "I have two close friends I can reach out to when I need a confidant. To be honest men do not come together and talk about feelings and emotions like women do. Men as boys are taught to provide with no expression to life's issues. The church helped me to form a relationship with God. It is a relationship I hold faithfully to this day.

I have been in many situations where I did not know how I would get out of, doubted, and thought of as being crazy, but through it all God has prevailed me. Knowing myself, accepting my faults and teaching growing in faith, I give honor and praise to my heavenly Father."

WMFHP6 – "My circle is my family, parents, wife, and cousins. My accountability is tied to my moral beliefs. My title as father, husband, deacon, etc… causes me to operate very carefully. If I do not hold myself accountable, I do not want to look upon the face of disappointed loved ones and those that respect me."

Week 4: Reflection Journal: Understanding Who You Are Spiritually (Who Are You)

WMFHP1 – "I am a servant. A worshiper of the Most High. I believe once we are grounded in these two facts our day to day operations become much easier. We are not easily offended. We lift up or encourage more. We help more. We are apt to teach."

WMFHP2 – "I was disappointed with this presentation. It promised more than it delivered. Beyond liking the presenter, I cannot say I took very much away from this discussion."

WMFHP3 – "It brought to light for the men an understanding of self as it relates to God, and their calling as presented from the text. God being our creator and sustainer, the one we are created in the image of. The one we get our true identity from. Without the Most High we are nothing."

WMFHP4 - Presenter

WMFHP5 – "Having an idea of who we are as human beings is essential in the development of our personality and character. You cannot expect to get a positive

outcome as mentor to any at-risk youth if you yourself do not have the mind set and capability of understanding self. Knowledge of self comes to mind, a term expressed by the Nation of Islam and the 5% Nation. Which simply breaks down to knowing yourself as a person, knowing your history, knowing your importance, and education. You may be the only person a troubled youth trust and opens up to."

WMFHP6 – "The goal is to point youth to God or, back to God. Remember the Israelite relationship was not always hostile, The hostility created the looking for an exodus, a way out. So does God use hostility as the driving force behind man, who is looking for peace and purpose."

Week 5; Reflection Journal: Responsibility and Self Control (Soothing and Stinking Thinking)

WMFHP1 – "You first have to be an example of responsibility and self-control. When interacting with the young generation never fail to speak into their lives. Speak positive, encouragement, and hope. They are important, and you never know when the last time you may see them. It was mentioned in class when you impart the seeds of positivity, you will see fruit when they come to you but, you must be ready to be there for them. No matter what time. You must be ready to be drop whatever you are doing and be there for them."

WMFHP2 – "I was left with the question of how we can counteract the pervasive influence of drill music and all that it symbolizes. Then it dawned on me that in this discussion Damon is focused on micro level change, and possibly mezzo level change. But macro level change, as important as it is, seems to be beyond the scope of this project."

WMFHP3 - Absent

WMFHP4 – "There have been pockets of my own life where my thoughts were not healthy — even as an adult. This session impressed upon me the importance of leaders and mentors cleaning up. The idea of conveying to the youth the importance of responsibility and weighing consequences must be modeled. I am not sure leaders have modeled the concept well. Our negative or stinking thinking has caused us problems and/or negative reactions reflected in our relationships. The session had me pondering the impression pressed upon our youth before many get a chance to balance. We sometime forget that many come from an environment that has not matured a sound sense of self."

WMFHP5 – "What you say to yourself should always be louder or mean more to you than what other people think. Developing a coherent sense of self is a critical psycho-social task in adolescence and early adulthood years."

WMFHP6 – "Stinking thinking has under girded the condition, but we must plan or create within the condition. We cannot leave holes or gaps in what we are creating. Gatekeepers must be placed at both ends to help regulate soothing and stinking thinking schools of thought. [12]'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,' as stated in Proverbs 23:7, refers to the individuals own lust. What is the drive or motivation behind the thought?"

Week 6: Reflection Journal: Repercussion of Impulsive Behaviors (Violence and Your Future)

WMFHP1 – "Do to social media the young generation feel they can react however and expect no repercussion. And we know this is not true. We have to get into

[12] Proverbs 23:7, NRSV.

the frequency of the young people. They are on social media constantly. We must teach through social media and if you have the opportunity to have them in a classroom, we must seize the moment and let them know how much we care and try to reverse the minds."

WMFHP2 – "It is a formidable task to think about reversing the trends that have been put into place ever since the black family was dismantled by the government policies and regulations dating back to at least the 1960s. It will take macro level intervention to undo nearly fifty-plus years of dismantling, destroying, and trauma to the black family and youth. In addition to micro and mezzo level change, macro change must be addressed."

WMFHP3 – "The discussion made the men in the group look at themselves and how they deal with personal conflict: past and present. Repercussion of impulsive behavior, violence, and your future are areas in the African American community that need serious attention. If we cannot control ourselves and provide a model for our youth to look at, then we are all destined for demise."

WMFHP4 - Absent

WMFHP5 – "I must admit at times I do get overwhelmed in thought, but that's when a situation is formed. I understand that in order to overcome, I must sustain and break down the opposition at hand. Control in a sense must be established to get the result you are looking for. If you can come up with a way to draw a common ground or friendly competition as to where you are able to set a standard to show there is more than

your way to solve an issue, than you have created a controlled environment. Control as a tool to show value in self and in thought. Mind over matter, not matter over mind."

WMFHP6 - No entry for this day

Week 7: Journal Reflection: Understanding Our History (Black Life in America)

WMFHP1 – "To understand our history is a daily process because there is so much of it. Recently, I just learned about the last ship that sailed to America and they are just now finding pieces of the ship. To understand Black history and being Black in America is humbling and it re-shifts your priorities. It helps me value our life. But the question is how do we grab the attention of our youth and encourage them into our history? I think the solution is monitoring what they are into continuously. You have to take what they like and bait them in to win them."

WMFHP2 – "Not enough time to this important session. Dr. Offutt was brilliant in his analysis and presentation of this topic."

WMFHP3 - Presenter

WMFHP4 – "The amount of information that was presented in this session was amazing. I never looked at Religion as the process of reconnecting and rejoining to Black Nationalism. The vastness of our rich history and what was left out purposely about ourselves is heartbreaking."

WMFHP5 – "Bridging the gap comes to mind with this session. I remember coming up in my teens being aware of Black History through hip hop music. The resurgence of Black Pride from the 70's was coming back around through music. I mentioned before that knowledge of self was a key ingredient in shaping the mind and

having self-awareness. Today's youth have to discover their origins because they feel it is not relatable or plays no part to what they are going through. We as mentors have to teach, as in the old school saying, 'each one teach one.' If we are to preserve the history and to build, we must re-establish the strong minds of our youth."

WMFHP6 – "Addressing the disconnect, I used 80's, and 90's pro-black rap music that sampled the music from the 50's, 60's, and 70's. The most influential song was, Public Enemy's 'You Can't Trust It.' The scene where the black woman was raped, her black husband celebrated that she was pregnant, until the baby was born, and it was white. My son questioned me for days and this was the connection. My son was open to my words again, he humbled himself as a small child."

Week 8: Reflection Journal; Continuation of Black History and Participant Reflections of Project

WMFHP1 – "The last day of the class I began brainstorming how I can deeper touch the lives of the youth that need it. I'm not talking about the youth that are in church, mosques, or in a program but, the youth that are considered at-risk. How can I help change the minds. Hearts, of the youth? I do things that have helped influence young people in Nigeria. A young person designated me to take him to his graduation instead of his parents and we are still connected to this day. I can mentor men in cartels while at the same time mentor pastors. I have touched hundreds and certain of thousands of people with my artistry. But there is still room for perfection."

WMFHP2 – "We came to this group as strangers, but we quickly bonded over the research topic. We shared interests, likes, and dislikes, life experiences, and recognized that what binds us as a community is greater that what can potentially divide us. Some of

us were completely strangers to each other, but we came together and found a common bond. We talked about becoming mentors. But little did we know that we ourselves were building relationships, forging out common ground, and forming community with each other. We were doing the very thing with each other that we were talking about doing with at-risk youth."

WMFHP3 – "I told the young brother at the beginning when he asked me to assist in this project and study, this work is needed. His vision of helping the youth out inspires me to continue the fight and assist him in any way possible."

WMFHP4 – "The sessions were rich and inspiring. As I reflect on the last few months, I did not have the time to do the cohort. However, I will argue that I could not afford not to set aside time. I enjoy watching and listening to experts in their field. The presenters for these sessions are experts in their fields and it showed. All in attendance had a yearning to help youth. Each session you could see the excitement on faces; to spend an hour or so discussing key topics. All the topics were interesting because they were relevant to not only tackling youth but self-evaluation. The men are better for being apart as previously stated in my journaling. I recommend these topics not only for mentors in this program, but men looking to grow."

WMFHP5 – "This eight week session been very informative and educational. The understanding of self upon understanding myself through God and how today's misguided youth are affected by today's society was an eye opener. I know for myself the obstacles I've gone through in this life have been very challenging and I've overcome some due to support from numerous people. Focusing on today's youth and the challenges they are facing, man I could not imagine what it would be like to grow up in

this age of social media. I will carry these sessions with me as another part of my growth in God and knowledge."

WMFHP6 – "My perspective changed because I realized how closed in and out I have let myself become. I see my world as evil continually. I let fear and unknowns keep me from using my gift in my community. But I am no longer bound!!!!"

Implications for the Future

As I reflect back over this doctoral ministry project, this is near and dear to me because of the impact it has on our youth and the Black community. There are so many of our Black youth suffering from mental issues, trauma, pain, and hurt who need help, who need guidance. It is imperative that our Black men heal from their own past issues. We as Black men need to be honest with ourselves about what we have been through in our life and start the healing process to be able to grow spiritually as well as mentally. We as a Black family and community still view therapy and counseling as a bad stigma, but we have been beaten down and broken — so much is needed. This is what I wanted the project to do: open the eyes of the participants to look at themselves and see what is in them. This can lead to needed healing and taking the necessary steps in that process. The men have to be relatable to our youth; we cannot be afraid of our own children. The youth will try everything they can to push you away because that is what they are use to seeing — people walking away from them.

When Black men realize the calling they have on their life to assist youth and take a hard look at themselves to heal from past hurt, pain, and trauma, they will be able to grow from it. They will want to get the training to be able to deal with youth in their

difficult situations. I am not naïve. I know that all Black men who are called to help youth will not want this type of training due to the fact they feel they are good and the training would not help them. I even had a gentleman ask about the research project when I had put out the flyer and I told him about it; he said, he was good. He had already been doing this type of work, and that is fine. But, when you see this as a calling, as a ministry, you will want the training for yourself.

In addition to the future, I would revisit the format and change this to a thirty two hour long training session. This will add to better implementations of aids, exercises, and give time to role playing. The sessions were supposed to have a fifteen minute review from previous week, thirty minute engagement with presenter, ten minute break, twenty minute focus group discussion, and fifteen minute journal reflection. But with only ninety minutes a session, the participants opted out of this format and wanted to push forward with the training sessions and discussions. That spoke to the interest and the severity of the attitude the men had for these sessions. I can see this mentor training taken across the country and taught in various cities and organizations. I plan to meet with a couple of my professional associate to devise a plan to be able take this training and present it on a local, state, and even national level.

Conclusion

This project is near and dear to my heart because it is my life's work in ministry. Making a difference in youths' lives, seeing the change that you can bring about by caring, and giving support is indescribable. Finding Black men who feel the call to mentorship, and not just a desire to work with youth, but an actual call on their life to

work with youth is heartwarming. I have met so many individuals who say they will help, who tell me if you need any assistance, to call them; but when the rubber hits the road, they come up with an excuse. To hear the participants in their final overview of the eight-week project state their changes and excitement, the need for it, and their commitment to their communities is indescribable.

Also, this ministry model opens up an avenue for men to seek out therapy and counseling for their own past issues they have not dealt with. There is one thing I have learned over the years; we cannot deal with these youth the same way we were raised. Our youth are in the age of social media and AI. They do not have to go outside of their homes to interact with their friends or other youth to strengthen bonds or make new friends. They can plug in to a gaming system and bam, they are all together and making new friends online. So, the face-to-face interaction and skills are not forming as how we formed ours. They are plugged into a world of military ops where they are killing all day, car games where they are stealing, killing, and robbing people all day. They have multiple, multiple, friends that have been violently killed and it has shaped their minds. For us as Black men to be effective, we have to have dealt with our own issues in our own life. Does this mean that if you have not dealt with your issues that you cannot help? By all means, no, it does not. But this project should spark the thought, the interest of seeking out that help. Working with youth in their formidable years, assisting them through life's heartaches takes a special kind of man. One who speaks life, and also, pours life into a child or youth is special. Not all are called to work with youth, especially this demographic of youth. To just jump in because you are an adult and you want to help, you could do more damage than good.

Furthermore, this model helps build up our Black community. This assists in empowering Black men to be active and seen in the community. This coincides with the vision of Within My Father's House, Inc., which is helping youth and adults obtain educational and spiritual development.[13] We understand the devastation of drugs and violence that has plagued our communities and the lack of educational opportunities. We are a few people who have the heart to serve our communities through spiritual and educational programs. Within My Father's House believes the time is now to rekindle our community spirit, our sense of family, and our commitment to one another. Lastly, once Black men who are called stand up an answer that call and get the training they need, they will become empowered to give back to our youth. It not only builds up our youth, but it also gives them a sense of pride in themselves. This builds up the Black community and breeds hope for the future.

[13] Damon Horton, "Vision Statement," Within My Father's House, https://withinmyfathershouse.weebly.com/.

APPENDIX A

EVENT FLYER

"All things are possible"

We are looking for 10 African Men who are serious about making a difference in our youth's lives.

If you are tired of seeing our African American youth, go in and out of the system contact me.

If you are tired of seeing African American youth, go into the juvenile system and funneled into the prison system contact me.

Eight-week mentorship project to train African American men to work with our African American youth, to improve cognitive student behavior through spiritual and cultural identity.

Contact Damon Horton
(859)684-2856

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Investigator Name: Damon Horton
Contact Information: (859)684-2856, (859)948-7457, dlhorton1@united.edu

Introduction
I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary.

Purpose:
I am conducting a study on Prophetic Activism: Equipping Mentors to Improve Student Cognitive Behavior Through Spiritual and Cultural Identity.

Requirements for Participation:
You are invited because you feel a call to assist youth in understanding their identity culturally and spiritually and to improve cognitive behavior and not to enter into the juvenile system.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to: participate in an eight-week project designed to help you be able to guide youth to an understanding of themselves and to help them navigate through risky situations and through conflict resolution. Sessions will be 90 minutes long once a week with presenters and focus group activities and discussions along with journal logs.

Human Subject Participants:
All participants must have consented to be in the study, and participants must be protected and treated fairly throughout the study. For example, children who are under 18 years old must have permission from their parents/guardians for their safety since they are considered a protected class (i.e., vulnerable population) by Federal Law.

Risk:
There is a possibility that sensitive information can bring up past trauma or hurt. We do have two Licensed Clinical Social Workers to assist those who need any counseling or therapy.

Benefits:
Participants will be equipped to mentor and be extended an opportunity to do so following the conclusion of the project.

Voluntariness:
Participantion is voluntary and you may skip any question you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate or not to participate will have no impact on anything. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please contact me directly in person, on the phone, or electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time. If you do not want to finish the process, there are no risk of retaliation at all for dropping out.

Confidentiality:
We will be careful to keep your information confidential, and we will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and focused groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted, and password protected. You can decide whether you want your name used. All names will be changed to protect your identity while participating in this project.

Summary:
If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me>

Signature:
Signing this paper means that you have read this, or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to _____Date Signed _____

APPENDIX C

PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Survey Questionnaire

Please choose one of the following: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Strongly Agree, Agree

1. Men who work this program must commit for one school year:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

2. Men who work with these youth should be willing to receive additional training: i.e., mental health, first aide, CPR:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

3. Men who work with this program must be willing to do some light physical activities:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

4. Men who train for this program must be willing to receive religious/cultural information from another group:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

5. Men who train for this program should be willing to participate in a two-day action retreat:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

6. This program should develop a set of behavioral responses that guide problematic issues:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

7. These students should be exposed to specific military resources:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

8. These students should have a certain level of academic competency determined by the school system:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

9. There should be a signed agreement between mentor and mentee:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

10. Mentors should be trained to assist mentees in employment readiness and financial stability:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

APPENDIX D

POST-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Post-Survey Questionnaire

Please choose, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Strongly Agree, Agree

1. Men who work with this program must committee for one school year:
(A)Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree.

2. Men who work with these youth should be willing to receive additional training: i.e., mental health, first aider, CPR:
(A)Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree.

3. Men who work with this program must be willing to do some light physical activities:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B)Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agrees (E) Agree.

4. Men who train for this program must be willing to receive religious/cultural information from another group:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

5. Men who train for this program should be willing to participate in a two-day action retreat:
(A)Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

6. This program should develop a set of behavioral responses that guide problematic issues:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

7. These students should be exposed to specific military resources:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

8. These students should have a certain level of academic competency determined by the school system:
(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

9. There should be a signed agreement between mentor and mentee:
(A) Strongly Agree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

10. Mentors should be trained to assist mentees in employment readiness and financial stability:
(A)Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Strongly Agree (E) Agree

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

Please choose an answer(s) that best describes your answer.

1. When you hear the term "Spirit Filled," what do you think of?
A. A person who serves the youth.
B. A free thinker.
C. A person who attends church.
D. A person who has worked with human services organization.

2. Should a person be considered for mentorship training if one applies?
A. They are Christian and not a regular church goer.
B. They have a past felony conviction.
C. They are members of another religion.
D. They have a history of service but no religious affiliation.

3. Should a person not be considered for mentorship training if one of the following applies?
A. They periodically use tobacco.
B. They periodically drink alcohol.
C. They periodically buy lottery tickets.
D. None of the above should disqualify.

4. Should mentors have to have one of the following or more than one?
A. Take an oath of service.
B. Provide a statement explaining their reason for wanting to mentor.
C. Have a background check.
D. Or any combination of the above.

5. Which one of these activity concept(s) should the mentorship program have?
A. One-on-one meetings with the mentee.
B. One group meeting a month.
C. One-on-one and group quarterly luncheons.
D. One-on-one and group holiday/special celebrations.

6. Which type of youth should be the priority participant involved in the program?
A. If they have a felony with the courts.
B. If they have a misdemeanor with the courts.
C. If they have behavioral issues with the school system.
D. All of the above.

7. Information and training can come from different sources. Which training source would provide the most immediate positive impact?
A. Person(s) with felonies.
B. Person(s) with previous substance abuse issues.

C. Person(s) who have not worked with juveniles in the past.
D. Juveniles themselves.

8. Which additional training source would you think could be the most effective help in the mentees' development in character and personality?
A. Military training.
B. Job Corp.
C. Vocational training.
D. Community college.

9. From the list provided, which organization would you share resources with?
A. M.A.D.E. Motivated All Day Everyday.
B. O.M.A.C. Operation Make A Change.
C. School system.
D. All of the above.

10. What is the primary thing you would like for the schools to do with your mentee?
A. Provide social services.
B. Guidance counseling.
C. Academic support.
D. Mental health services.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. Why do you want to work with this demographic of youth?
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. What is your approach to conflict?
4. Describe a significant change in your life.
5. What are your hobbies?
6. What community organizations do you belong to?
7. What community service do you do?

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